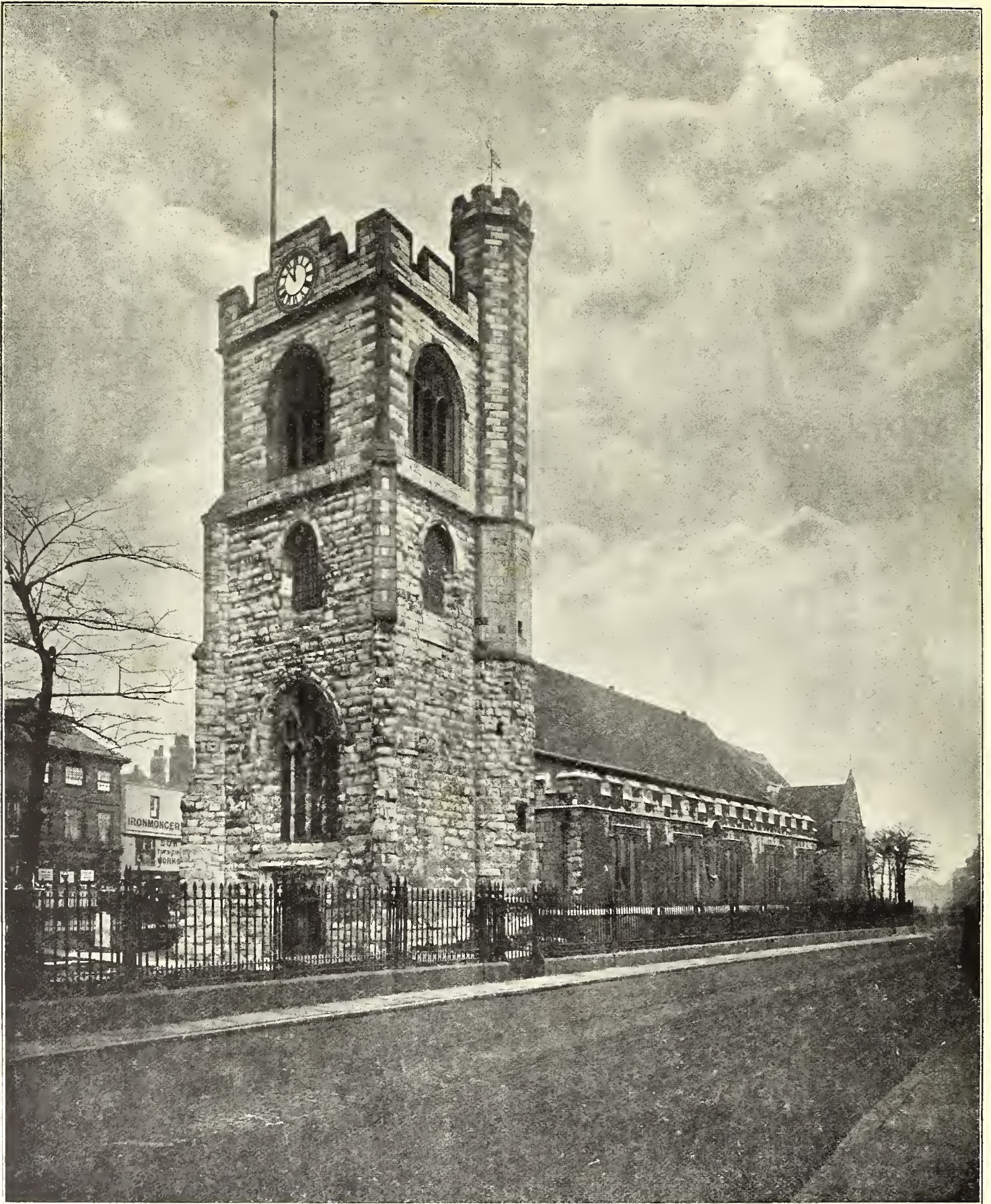




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The Church from the South-West. From a photograph taken *circa* 1895.

SAINT MARY STRATFORD BOW.
BY OSBORN C. HILLS, A.R.I.B.A.
WITH AN INTRODUCTORY
CHAPTER BY C. R. ASHBEE, M.A.
BEING THE SECOND MONO-
GRAPH OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE SURVEY OF THE
MEMORIALS OF GREATER
LONDON.

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*Bow Church from the A.C.
after a picture probably by J. M. Haden,
circa 1760.*

AN INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

BY C. R. ASHBEE.

IT is good to think that the second of the Monographs issued by the Committee for the Survey of the Memorials of Greater London, is the record not only of an important building described, but of an important building saved from destruction. Three times during the present century has the Church of S. Mary Stratford atte Bowe been reported upon by experts as in imminent danger of falling, and its immediate removal advised. Fortunately the good people of Bow have been either too sensible, too poor, or too simple-minded to follow the advice of the experts and thus their old church has been, with one or two additions and alterations that are described in the following pages, left to them much in the condition in which it has stood during the last four centuries.

That this has been so is due primarily to the fact that the Committee decided to adopt the report of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (The S.P.A.B.) in preference to other more elaborate schemes of restoration. Whatever may be the future verdict on the fitness of the restoration one thing is certain, namely, that the adoption of the S.P.A.B. report saved the church; and by saving the church may be taken to mean quite literally, the body of the whole fabric with the exception of the tower. The key to the position was the rebuilding of the north wall and the chancel; and the alternative scheme was coupled and not unwisely with an enlargement for the needs of the parish, and this enlargement it was only possible to get on the north and the east. All the expert opinion, however, was agreed that if the north wall were removed the whole fabric would be endangered, and Sir Arthur Blomfield was quite right in insisting that under the circumstances the best plan was to pull the whole church down, with the exception of the tower, and build a new one.

With the question whether it would have been better to have had a larger church I am not here concerned, that is a parish question; but from the point of view of saving to greater London one of its most interesting and beautiful landmarks, there is no doubt that the adoption of Sir Arthur Blomfield's proposal would have been most unfortunate. The Committee chose and, as I believe the result shows, chose wisely. As this choice entailed a different method of carrying out the work than that commonly in use in church restoration, I may perhaps be permitted to say a word on the matter. A point of principle is involved in this, which is not unimportant, & which may be indicated, for the guidance of committees who desire to retain the historic features of the buildings under their care and are anxious of not incurring the charge of reckless restoration.

A committee is necessarily rather a timid organism, and when its archi-

*The S.P.A.B.
report*

*The point of
principle in-
volved*

tect comes to it and says: "Your church is in a very bad condition, but I cannot tell you what it will cost to put it right till I begin pulling it about. It may be £1000, it may be £5000; let me have £500 to begin with and I'll report further," this timidity is not strengthened. Yet this, to all intents and purposes, is what happened in the case of Bow Church, & there is no doubt that in nine cases out of ten where there has to be any extensive repairing, or if the objectionable word must be used—"restoration," it is in this form that the problem first presents itself. Unless an architect starts with the hypothesis that he is going to pull down a wall & rebuild it, with say 10 per cent. of the old stone, pull down a roof and re-roof it with 2 per cent. of the old timber, unless he deliberately draws up his specification for the builder's contract on the basis of new work, he cannot honestly give his committee a definite idea what genuine "restoration" work will cost, nor can the contractor he employs honestly fulfil the contract entered into.

I use the word "honestly" advisedly, because I hold that most restoration work is dishonest. Not that the walls when built are not well built nor the timber well chosen, but that the complete work purports to be what it is not. It is not the old building with the story of the centuries in it, it is a new building with a few of the old materials retained. It is difficult to blame any one in particular, committee, architect, contractor, or workman; they do not meet on a basis of mutual trust. It is a social and economic rather than a structural or æsthetic principle that is involved. In short, the modern building contract system is inapplicable to the work of genuine restoration.

As an illustration of what is implied, the external walling may be instanced. The illustration, No. 12, facing p. 20 will give some idea of what the wall surface, rotten & corroded by the foul gases of Stratford and Bromley was like: to take down & rebuild this would have been impossible, but to carefully and reverently go over it stone by stone, and joint by joint, was not, & this we did. Where the joints were defective they were made good, where the gaps were large they were filled with flint or tile, where the old stone was sound at heart but decayed on the surface, it was cut away and stopped with cement, just as a careful dentist, who is not concerned with pulling out his patients' teeth, cuts away decay & then does his stopping; only when absolutely necessary was new stone inserted.

It will be observed that work of this kind is better done on the scaffolding than in the office, indeed it is not an architect's work at all but a mason's, as most good restoration always must be, and it cannot be contracted for.

At Bow Church therefore, to meet the financial risks involved in working without a contract, the work was broken up into sections, the care of it intrusted to Messrs. Hills & Son under the supervision of a committee

of architects* appointed by the S.P.A.B., by whom the Society's report was drawn up. No individual contractor was employed, but different firms or masters were engaged, *e.g.*, Mr. H. C. Mitchell of Tamworth, to do the masons' work, the Guild of Handicraft, of Essex House, Bow, E., to do the carpentry and smiths' work. The payments were for the most part time payments on schedule basis, though in some instances special contracts were entered into. Payments were made monthly on the certificates of the local architects endorsed by the hon. sec. of the Committee, and the members of the S.P.A.B. Committee visited the work in turn. For the fuller details as to the condition of the work and the manner in which it has been carried out, I cannot but refer to the chapters of Mr. Osborn Hills, who has shown in them the same conscientious care in getting together what there is known of the history of the church as he showed during the repair of the building.

C. R. ASHBEE.

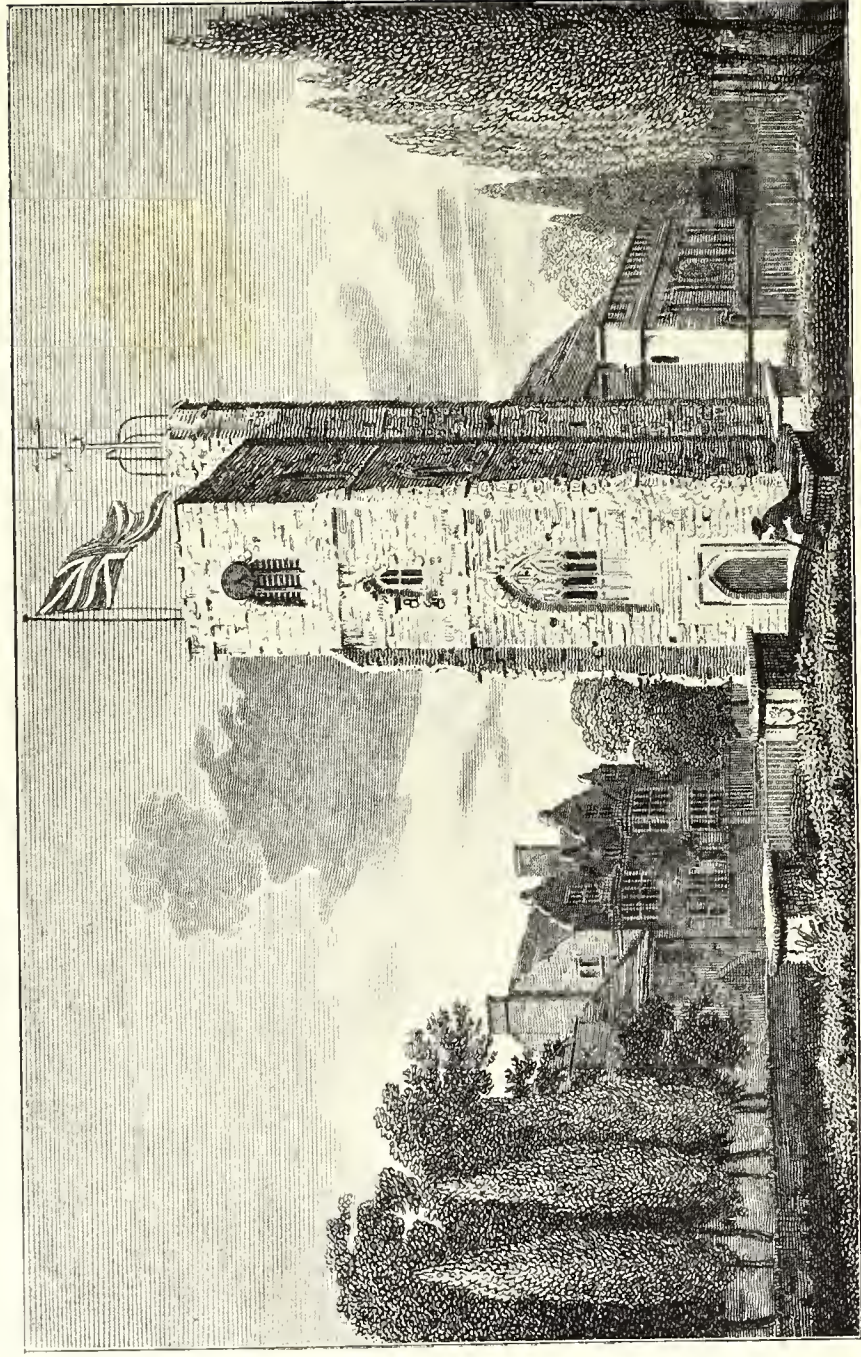
Essex House, Bow, E.

**Messrs. Thackeray Turner, W. R. Lethaby, Philip Webb, C. Winmill, and C. R. Ashbee.*

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The Church from the South-West, in 1806.



The Church from the North-West, in 1824.
Note: The houses in front are seen to be in course of demolition.



The Church, from the West, in 1809.

Note: The artist has omitted the south-west buttress.

CHAPTER I. A FEW HISTORICAL NOTES BEARING UPON THE HISTORY OF S. MARY STRATFORD BOW.

THE fragmentary nature of the records relating to the venerable parish church of Bow renders any attempt to compile a complete history of this sacred edifice a somewhat difficult task. Beyond the brief references contained in the well-known works of Stow, Strype, and Lysons, and the short account of the church to be found in Insley's "Memorials of Bow Church," very little appears to have been published regarding the early history of "The Chapel of Stratford atte Bowe," as it was formerly termed. But such information as can be gleaned from those authorities, & from a study of the building itself and its monuments and registers, establishes beyond dispute the fact that for at least four centuries the church, although repeatedly repaired, has remained, generally speaking, unaltered and even unenlarged; and that for a yet longer period the same site in the king's highway has formed the consecrated spot upon which the inhabitants of the riverside town of Stratford atte Bow have been wont to perform the duties of their religion.

*Inaccuracy
of Records*

In trying to piece together the various records one cannot fail to be impressed with the want of preciseness on the part of both writers and artists. The latter are the greater sinners: in studying the illustrations of a century since startling discrepancies are revealed. To quote a case in point—one of the largest of the buttresses of the tower is shown in an illustration dated 1806* but not in one of 1809*; while in 1826* it reappears bearing such a venerable character that it evidently could not have been demolished & rebuilt in the interim. However, it is well known that historical accuracy was not a quality that the engraver felt himself called upon to exercise. The number of battlements shown in an illustration would depend, not upon the number existing, but upon what would, in the artist's opinion, look the best. One very badly drawn view of "Bow Church in Middlesex, 1754," to be seen at Guildhall, is so inaccurate that one can only conclude that the artist never saw our ancient structure.

It seems that from time immemorial a village existed upon the banks of the Lea, around the site upon which Bow Church now stands, and that a ford was used by the villagers. Did they wish to be expeditious they would cross by the *straight* ford, but the crossing was fraught with some danger, & the cautious would make a *détour* and use the *old* & safer ford.†

*The village
at Bow*

*See illustrations Nos. 3, 5, & 4, opposite.

† Leland.

Bow bridge

It was in the reign of Henry I. that the bridge “arched like unto a bowe” was erected, and so we get the name Stratford at the bow. The building of the bridge was due to Queen Matilda, Henry’s wife, and she, according to Leland, was herself “well washed” in the waters of the Lea.

*Stratford
Bow*

The name of Stratford Bow seems in the early days to have been applied indiscriminately to the villages of Bow, Bromley, Stratford & Old Ford, which surrounded the straight ford and the bridge in the form of a bow. In course of time the straight ford and the old ford gave their names to the localities of Stratford & Old Ford respectively. Later, Stratford seems to have been written Stratford atte Bowe, for so we find it in Chaucer, who lived between 1340 and 1400:

“And Frensch she spak ful faire and fetysly
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.”

—*Canterbury Tales*.

Evidently “the father of English Poetry,” who himself lived at Aldgate, was acquainted with the peculiarities of the Bow of his own time. The school here meant was probably that of the neighbouring convent of St. Leonard Bromley. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the name of Old Ford appears to have been written as one word, Oldford. Defoe so writes it in his “Memoirs of the Plague,” and so we find it on one of the monuments of the church—that erected to Thomas Rust, who died in 1704. We, in the nineteenth century, have reverted to the original mode of writing it, by separating its syllables again into distinct words, & super-adding to each of them the dignity of capital letters.*

The bridge was in existence until some sixty-five years ago, when having become dilapidated, and being too narrow and also looked upon as scarcely safe, it was removed to make way for the present structure. This latter erection was, with some ceremony, declared open for traffic in 1835. Writing just one hundred years ago the Rev. Daniel Lysons describes Bow as follows: “The Village of Bow, as it is usually called (dropping its original name of Stratford, and preserving only the distinction), is situated two miles to the east of London on the Essex road. The parish lies within the hundred of Ossulston, and is bounded on the east by the river Lea, which separates it from Low-layton and Westham in Essex; on the north by Hackney; on the north-west by Bethnal Green; on the west and south-west by Stepney; and on the south-east by Bromley S. Leonard. It contains about 465 acres of land, of which 218 are arable, the remainder pasture, upland pasture, and marsh-land, except 13 acres occupied by nursery gardens.”

* *Insley*.

The Chantry Returns state that the Chapel of Stratford Bow was founded by King Edward III. on a piece of ground which formed part of the King's highway; but Newcourt* places the date of its erection earlier, for he says: "In the year 1311 a licence was granted by Bishop Baldock (dated from Stepney) to the inhabitants of Stratford & Oldford, to build a chapel for the convenience of attending divine service, they being so far distant from their parish church, and the roads in winter impassable by reason of the floods.

By the terms of this licence, the inhabitants were to assign a sufficient income for the chaplain to attend divine service on all the great holidays at the mother church and contribute to its repair. Long after this some differences arose between the inhabitants of Stepney and those of Stratford,† who seem to have been desirous of rendering themselves independent of the mother church. Our villagers were worsted in the struggle in the year 1497, and an agreement was then drawn up, whereby the inhabitants of Stratford† promised for the future to acknowledge themselves parishioners of Stepney, and their chapel subject to that church. The inhabitants of Stepney on their part agreed to accept 24s. per annum in lieu of all charges for repairs of the mother church, & to dispense with the attendance of the people of Bow except on the feast of their patron, S. Dunstan, and on the Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when they were to accompany the rest of the parishioners in procession to S. Paul's Cathedral. In the reign of Henry VIII., when Westminster was made a bishopric, the parish of Stepney was excused from this procession to S. Paul's upon condition that the rector and churchwardens of Stepney and the curate and chapel-wardens of Stratford (Bow) should attend on the said day, and make an offering of 10d. at S. Peter's, Westminster.‡

By reference to the Chantry Roll in the Augmentation Office it will be seen that Hellen Hilliard gave certain property producing 50s. per ann. and other persons subscribed a total of £13 6s. 8d. "to augment the priest's wages." When the chantries and guilds were seized by the King, these lands, sharing the general fate, were sold. The inhabitants attempted to recover them but without avail. Even all the "olde Latin Boks" were taken. The Minister's salary in Henry VIII.'s day was £8 per annum, but in the year 1654 the sum of £92 was voted to Fulk Bellers, minister of Stratford Bow.§

It is certain, then, that a chapel existed at Bow during the fourteenth & fifteenth centuries, the site & plan of which were beyond doubt identical with what is now seen, except that the vestries & organ-chamber, hereafter mentioned, have been added.

*The Chapel
of Stratford
Bow, 1311*

*Bishop Bal-
dock's licence*

1497

*Chantry
Roll*

* Vol. I., p. 742. † Stratford was synonymous with Bow and Old Ford.

‡ Newcourt, Vol. I., p. 742.

§ Lysons, p. 497.

Mr. Insley in his Memorials then says that “no part of the present structure, judging from its architecture, is older than the closing years of the fifteenth century—about 1480 or 1490.” Having very carefully studied the various parts of the fabric and searched the writings of Stow, Strype, Leland, Lysons, and the Parish Registers, I can come to no conclusion other than that Mr. Insley is mistaken. Neither do I see the force of his argument when he says, referring to the dispute of 1497: “Now, what more likely than that the people of Bow, having just become possessed of a new church, should desire to be independent and to be formed into a separate parish, free from the control of, and obligation to pay dues to Stepney, the benefits of union with which parish were henceforth all on one side?”

The conjecture is groundless, and Lysons, writing about 1797, distinctly says “the original structure still remains.” “It consists of a chancel, nave, and two aisles, separated from the nave by octagonal pillars and pointed arches. The tower is of stone, square and plain and not embattled.”

Now we *know* that the church has not been pulled down since that year, and therefore we may safely conclude that it is the original structure erected under the Licence of Bishop Baldock in 1311. It has, however, been altered and restored so often that only the wall of the north aisle can be properly attributed to that date, & the following pages are an attempt to trace so far as is possible the various alterations from that day to this.

It seems almost certain that a few years before the compromise of 1497 a complete restoration had been undertaken, for much of the work is of this date, viz.:

(1) The base and middle storey of the tower, including the tower arch and west window, also the two traceried windows just exposed by the present restoration.

(2) The chancel walls and ceiling, but not the gabled roof over.

(3) The roof of the nave (about half of which has just been renewed).

(4) The walls of the nave and the lower portions of the south aisle wall.

For many years the exit from the church was by two doors, one at the west end of each aisle. The west doors were closed and the space within the tower (now occupied by lobbies, &c.) formed a convenient baptistry. This probably remained until shortly after the death, in 1701, of Mrs. Prisca Coborn, Bow's greatest benefactress, her trustees erected a gallery in the tower, projecting a little more than one bay into the nave to accommodate the children of the school she founded. Also she bequeathed funds for the construction of a coved ornamental plaster ceiling, with a large central dome.

It does not appear that the dedication of the church to S. Mary took place until 1719, when the church ceased to be a chapel-of-ease to Stepney &

became the parish church of S. Mary Stratford Bow. Until this date it was known as the chapel of Stratford Bow.

Sir Walter Besant states: "It was formerly the church of a nunnery founded at Stratford-le-Bow by William the Conqueror." This is quite a mistake, as was pointed out by the "Builder" of June 10, 1899. No doubt he was confusing Bow with the neighbouring church of Bromley, which exactly fits his description. The two parish churches are not more than 300 yards apart.

The change was brought about by an Act of Parliament in the ninth year of the reign of Queen Anne (1711), followed at intervals by supplementary Acts for the erection of fifty new churches "in and about the cities of London and Westminster & the suburbs thereof." Limehouse, Spitalfields and S. George's in the East were among the number & were made independent parishes. By the same Acts the Hamlet of Bow was separated from the parish of Stepney in 1719.

*The Act of
Q. Anne
1711*

In the "Minutes of Vestries and other matters,"* is a resolution of considerable interest and importance which reads as follows:

*1719
Vestry
minutes*

1736. *Thursday.* *25th March.*
The Chancel being very much out of repair and it appearing to the Vestry that it ought to be kept in repair at the charge of the Parish, Agreed that the said Chancel be forthwith put into necessary repair.

1736

Six Vestrymen present.

It is probable that the oak panelling of the sanctuary of the chancel was introduced at this time but no record appears to exist.

The next item of interest is the fire of April 1747, which did considerable damage. It was customary to keep the valuable deeds and papers in the tower, and the original Deed of Consecration was much injured. The clock also was destroyed. The fire seems to have originated from a house on the south side of the church and the clock, which then hung over the roadway and projected a considerable distance, afforded a ready means of communicating the flames to the sacred building.

1747

This projecting clock does not seem to have been restored, for the following minute apparently refers only to the works and dials of the clock in the tower.

1762. *Sunday.* *6th August.*
Mr. Thwaite of Clerkenwell to thoroughly repair the Church Clock for the sum of Ten Guineas and to keep the same in repair and wind and regulate the same every week and clean when necessary for the sum of 50s. per annum.

1762

* *From a copy in the possession of Mr. H. L. Wheatley, parish clerk.*

In the year 1755, in preparation for the war afterwards known as the Seven Years' War, lead was greatly in demand and many public buildings were stripped of their roofs to provide material for bullets. The chancel of Bow, so runs the legend, shared this fate; and, it being necessary to procure protection from the weather, the gable was formed in brickwork and roofed with tiles as now seen. The fact that the roof was thus altered is certain, but no record has yet been found indicating whether the scarcity of lead affected the question.*

*The legend
of the unbap-
tized infants*

Another legend of doubtful authenticity refers to the alleged burying of unbaptised infants in the roof of the chancel. This has been done in other churches, the parents believing, it is said, that the holy angels hovering around the sanctuary would be more likely to take the babes to Heaven than if interred in some less holy place. Though the legend may have gained some believers there can be no doubt that such a custom was never practised at Bow, for until 1755 the roof was flat, and no gable existed in which the body could be placed, and it is highly improbable that such an act would be done during the last century and a half. Nevertheless the roof was entered a few years ago & careful search was made: no remains, save those of one or two sparrows, were discovered.

*The Bow
Baker*

In some of the older illustrations it will be seen that the westernmost windows of both aisles were at one time doors. It appears from a tale that has been handed down, that, for about a century, a baker's shop existed opposite the north aisle door. This baker cooked the Sunday dinner for several of the shopkeepers living on the south side of the way. An assistant posted inside the church gave a signal when the preacher reached his "seventhly and lastly," whereupon the baker & his boys instead of walking round outside the churchyard, took the short cut through the church, making such a clatter with their hot plates and pies that after vainly attempting to stop the practice by other means, the authorities blocked up the doors and re-opened those at the west end under the tower.†

It is hardly conceivable that the baker's action alone caused the doors to be blocked, though it is probable the incident related may have had some bearing upon the alterations at this time.

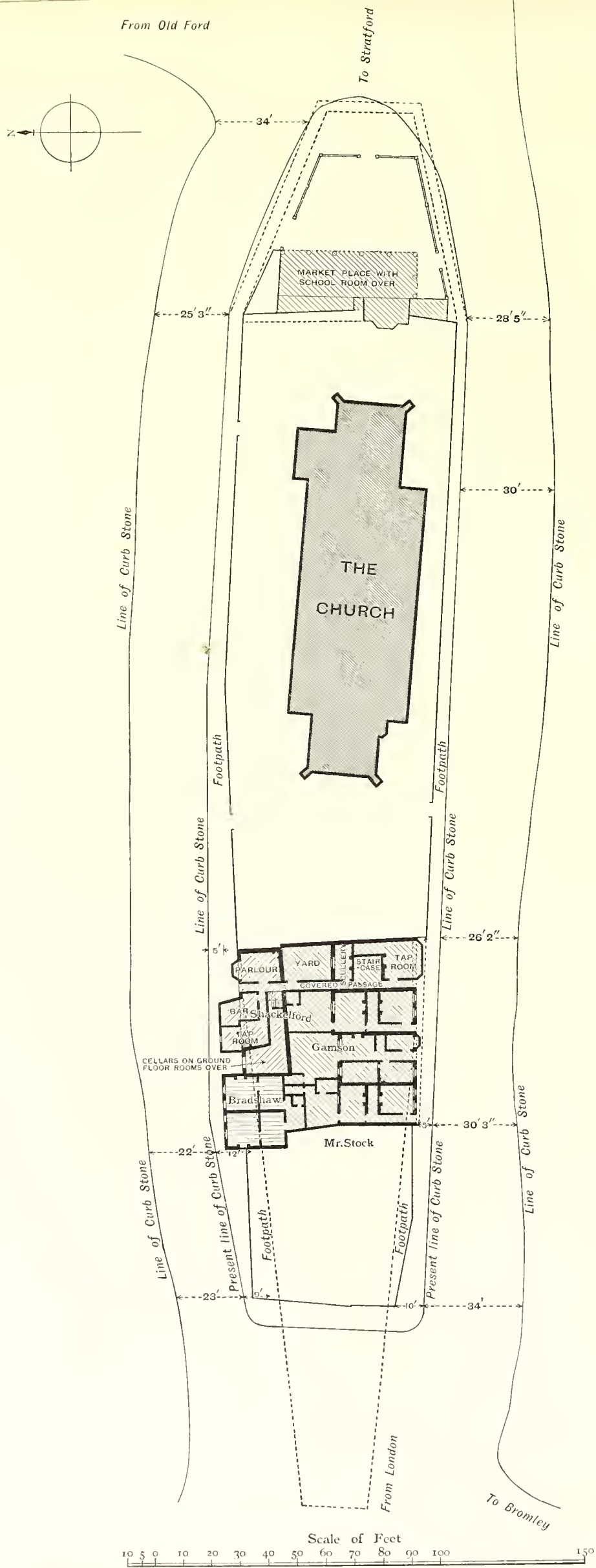
It would seem that after the minute of 1762 the vestry no longer undertook the repair and maintenance of the church.

*The repair-
ing of 1794*

In 1794 the church was cleaned and re-decorated, and the south aisle restored and refaced externally with Portland stone as now seen. It is probable also that the pulpit and seats were altered.

* See Ch. IV. p. 46.

† The parish clerk affirms that it was the baker's customers who were the offenders.



Plan of Church and Churchyard, from a Drawing dated 1824, by Wm. Ford, Esq.

In 1824 the crowded condition of the church and churchyard was becoming a scandal. Every fresh interment caused the removal and desecration of some deceased predecessor, &, perhaps the most potent reason of all, the living foresaw that they could not be interred in Bow churchyard unless the latter were enlarged. The outcome of the agitation was an appeal to Parliament for a special Act to empower the purchase of the old market-place (long since disused) at the east end; and the purchase of the taverns and houses at the west end. The Bill was passed & became law on the 20th May 1825, and shortly afterwards the demolition began of "all the premises which lie at the east and west ends of the present churchyard of the said parish church of S. Mary Stratford Bow, and between the Turnpike Roads which surround the same."* At the same time the low wall enclosing the churchyard was demolished & replaced by the present cast-iron railing on the granite base. Four feet, it is said, of the topmost earth and bones were removed to the Stratford marshes, and thus fresh provision was made for the rapidly increasing number of burials.

The Act of
1825

In 1829 the fall of the upper part of the tower necessitated another partial restoration, which is described in Chapter IV.

Fall of por-
tion of the
tower in 1829

For many years the church windows had been fitted with red curtains, but these were removed in 1836, and in 1844 the ceiling put up at the expense of Mrs. Prisca Coborn† was removed & the old rafters exposed. About 1850 the small addition to the brick vestry was made, which addition is now used as the choir entrance lobby. To this alteration is due, no doubt, the blocking up of the window discovered in making the new doorway by the pulpit as described in Chapter II.

The restora-
tions of 1836
and 1844

Referring to the drawing of the interior dated 1820 it will be seen that two of the piers were, at that date, of much greater bulk, and that the arcading ended with a half arch at the eastern end. These piers were cut down and the arcading completed as now seen.

The west end of the south aisle was at one time filled with a gallery for the sole use of the inmates of the workhouse.‡ It was small and very low and was removed in 1855.

For years past stones of varying size had from time to time fallen from the face of the tower, especially during the prevalence of a westerly wind, & many people were afraid to enter the church. The pathway (the gates of which may still be seen) across the churchyard at that time, ran close by the west doors, but in 1883, the fall of stones & débris increasing, and one large stone falling within a few inches of a passing pedestrian, the

* From a copy kindly lent by Mr Wheatley.

† See p. 12.

‡ This fine old house is shown in the illustration No. 3 opposite p. 8.

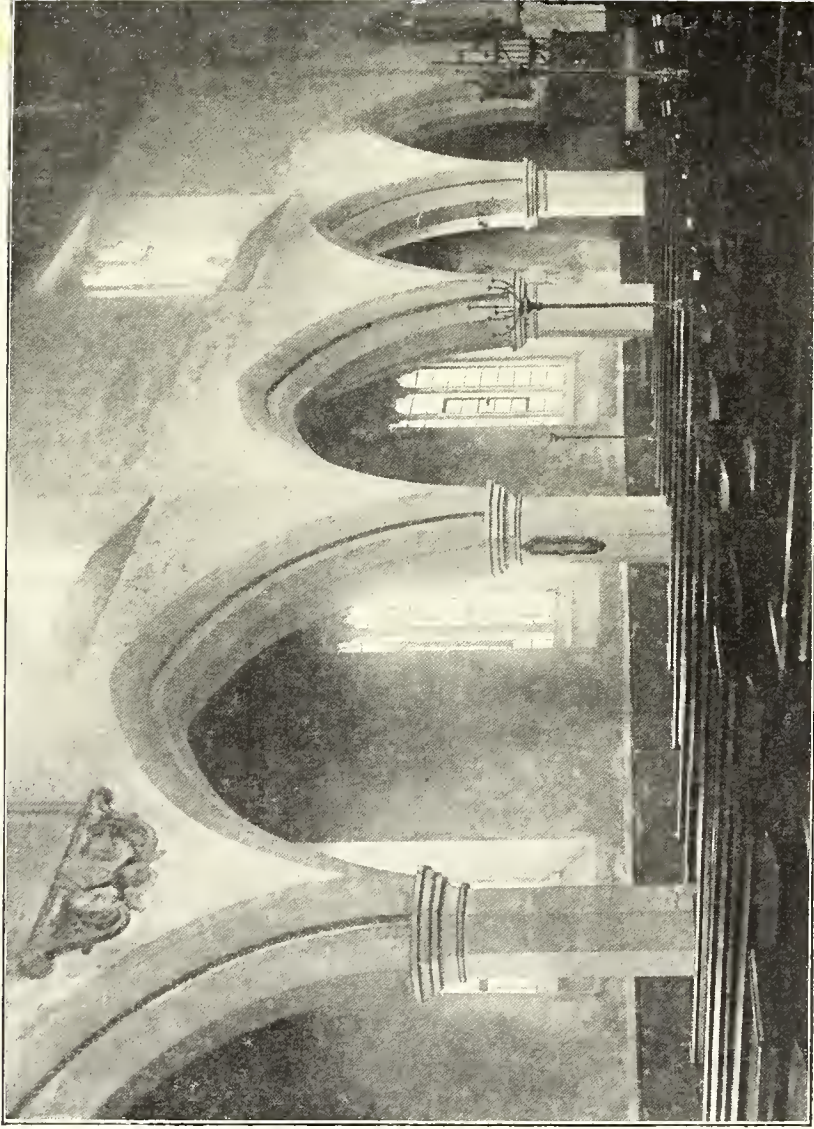
pathway was shifted several feet to the west, and such loose stones as could be easily reached without a scaffold were wedged up with Roman cement.

The alteration of the east window is described under the head of stained glass in Chapter III. and also in Chapter IV. In fact only one alteration remains to be recorded in this chapter dealing with the History of Bow Church, viz., that in 1870 an organ chamber was built upon the south side of the chancel. The west window and the tower arch had from 1702 until this date been completely blocked out from view by the organ, the gallery & the ringers' floor. The removal of the organ, followed in 1891 by the raising of the ringers' floor and the demolition of the gallery, has resulted in an unobstructed view of the finest architectural feature in the church.

What would the worshippers of only some fifty years ago say if they stood to-day in the church as it now appears? Probably they would regret that their family pews were gone and that the "paupers and common people" now sit side by side with their more wealthy neighbours instead of being relegated to galleries. The loss of the heavy coved ornamental plaster ceiling and the exposure of the mediæval rafters would possibly excite their condemnation, and question would be raised why the choir should not face the east like other people. Doors have become windows, and in one case a window (first blocked up) has become a door. Galleries, organ, seats, pulpit, curtains and even the nave arcading and floor have been removed, altered, or re-arranged, and the ceiling gone, within this short period. Probably the church would not now be recognised.

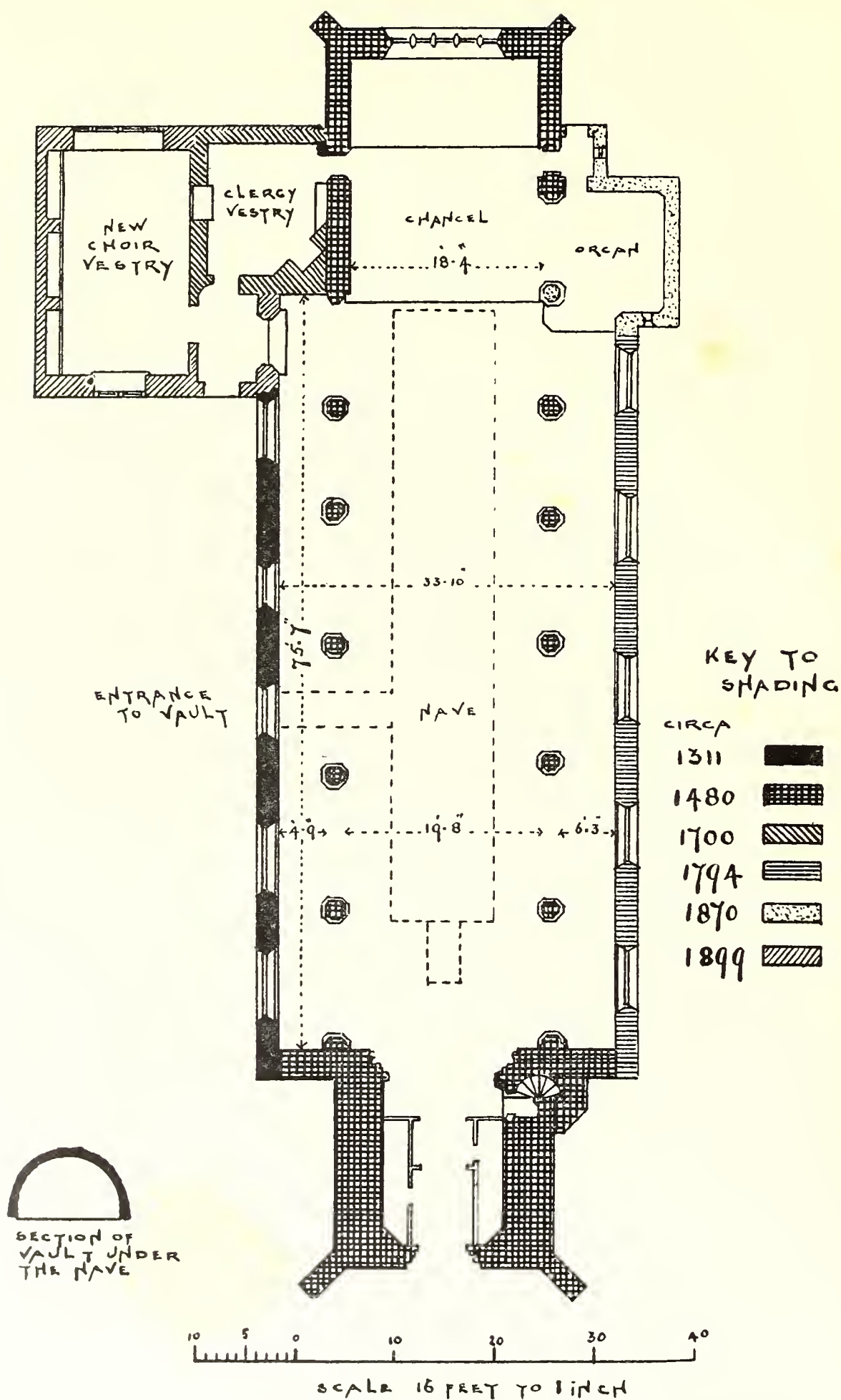
Externally, however, the case is very different, for though the iron railing takes the place of the old low wall, and the organ chamber and choir vestry have been built, the tower, the nave, aisles and chancel remain the same.

XXIV.



The North Arcade and Aisle before the Restoration.

VIII.



The Plan. Showing the approximate dates attributed to the various parts.

CHAPTER II. AN EXAMINATION OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH AND THE MATERIALS USED THEREIN FROM TIME TO TIME.

THE church is remarkable neither for constructional skill, nor enrichment of detail. Surrounded of old by marsh land, the building materials nearest to hand did not admit either of vigorous treatment, or delicate ornamentation; and it is surprising that in such a position, and built with such materials, the walls are as sound and the structure as secure as it is.

The chancel and aisles may be said to be built of chalk, flint, and ragstone rubble faced chiefly with thin coursed ashlar built with little or no bond. Even the brick walls of the nave are constructed largely of chalk & rubble. The mortar, used lavishly in the construction of the walls, is generally of excellent quality, that in the lower bay of the tower especially so. It is mottled in appearance, this being occasioned by the large quantity of chalk mixed with it, and it is exceedingly tough. It is well that it is so, for on the soundness of the mortar depends the length of life of the building. The chalk throughout is perfectly dry & sound, and is occasionally found in roughly squared blocks; but as a general rule this is not so. In a very few instances during the recent restoration, chalk was found on the external face of the wall, but was then very much decayed.

The earlier brickwork is of good quality. A curious feature of many of the red bricks in the eastern gable and elsewhere, was the large number of thick broken clay tobacco pipe stems which had been embedded in the walls. The oak timbers in both chancel and nave roofs have practically been untouched until the present restoration.

*Earlier
Brickwork*

Speaking generally the structural features of this remnant of mediæval architecture, are (1) the absence of bond in the masonry; (2) the successful employment of chalk in large quantities; and (3) the excellent quality of the mortar.

The nave is constructed with chalk and rubble, faced with red bricks externally & internally, the latter being plastered. The south wall is a little out of plumb, and the north wall very much so; the latter also bulges outwards considerably. A line stretched taut from the tower end to the chancel end of the wall, reveals the fact that it bulges $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches outwards in the centre, while it is $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches out of plumb in its total height for

Nave

nearly the whole length. The reason for this has been assigned to the removal in 1844, of the ceiling and joists which were said to tie the two opposite walls together. When, however, it is borne in mind that the walls are not fractured, and bear no signs of having gone quickly; also that the ceiling was no part of the original design (being added by the Trustees of Mrs. Coburne in 1702, and removed again in 1844) it will be conceded that the defect is unlikely to be the work of half a century only.

The nave was originally supported upon stone piers of varying size, with a plain chamfered arcading. After many alterations all assumed the present octagonal shape; and it is to these repeated alterations we owe the fact that only two bays are alike, all the others differ both in height and span. The piers are probably a ragstone, though a high authority has expressed the opinion that they may be Hassock. That they are limestone may be assumed. At one of the Restorations referred to in the preceding chapter they were roughened and plastered.

*Clerestory
Windows*

The clerestory windows are of Box ground stone,* some of which having weathered badly, were, at a former restoration, patched & repaired with Roman cement. This coating having become loose in places, it has been found necessary to again repair them; this time Portland stone has been used, together with the best of the Chilmark taken from the hood mould of the "Churchwarden Gothic" window in the chancel.

Oak Timbers

The oak timbers in the roof are of great strength and weight, taking into consideration their number (there are forty-four principals) & the work they are called upon to perform. It is probable that they have remained untouched, until recently, since the day they were framed.

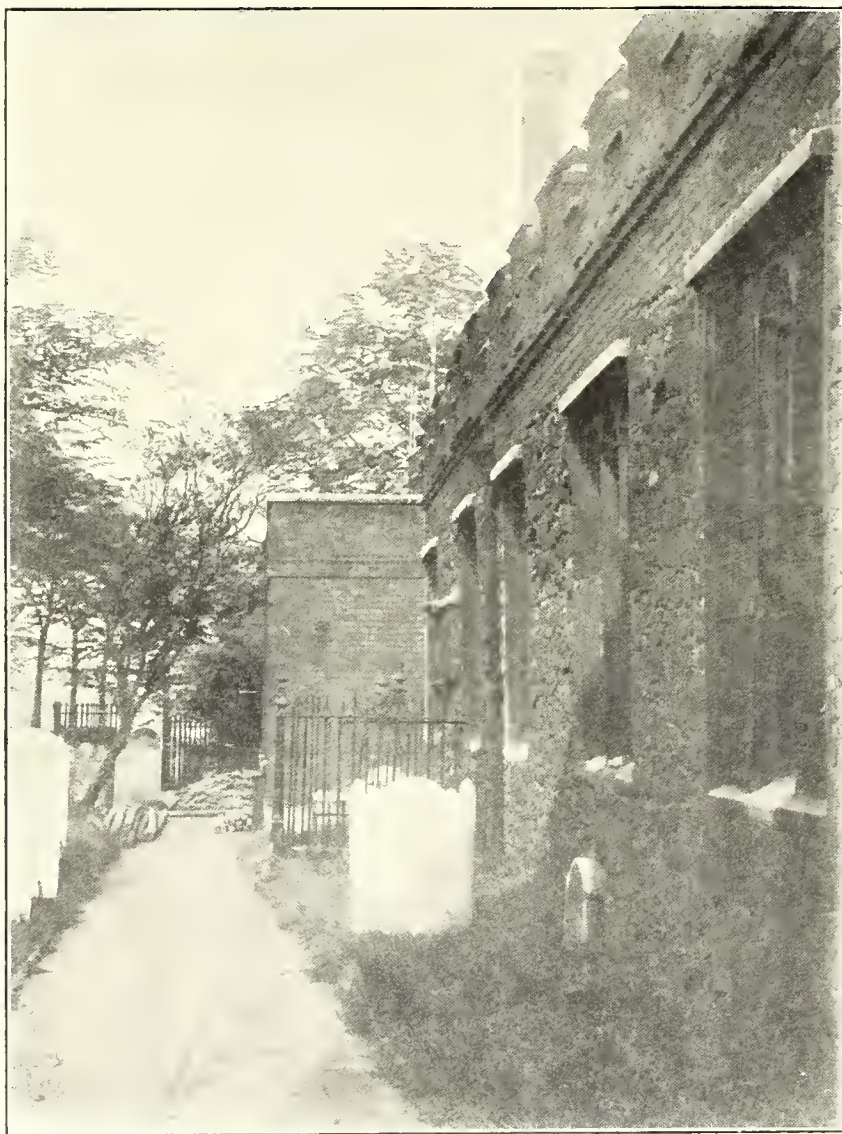
North Aisle

The north aisle wall is built of random rubble, and is surmounted by a red brick battlemented parapet. The wall abounds in chalk, & it is clearly of older construction than any other portion of the edifice. On removing the interior plaster in order to fix the new oak wainscoting, the wall was discovered to be largely faced with chalk, some of which was squared & bedded after the manner of masonry; & even on the outside face several pieces of chalk were found, though greatly perished. Much firestone was also found built in with the flints and ragstone rubble on the exterior face. The firestone was so badly decayed (exposing the interior mortar & chalk to the assaults of the weather and to the attacks of atmospheric gases) that it was found necessary to remove it, and replace with Portland. On the whole the interior of the wall is still fairly sound, and as long as it remains weather tight no danger is to be apprehended.

While piercing the wall for the new doorway leading to the vestries, an

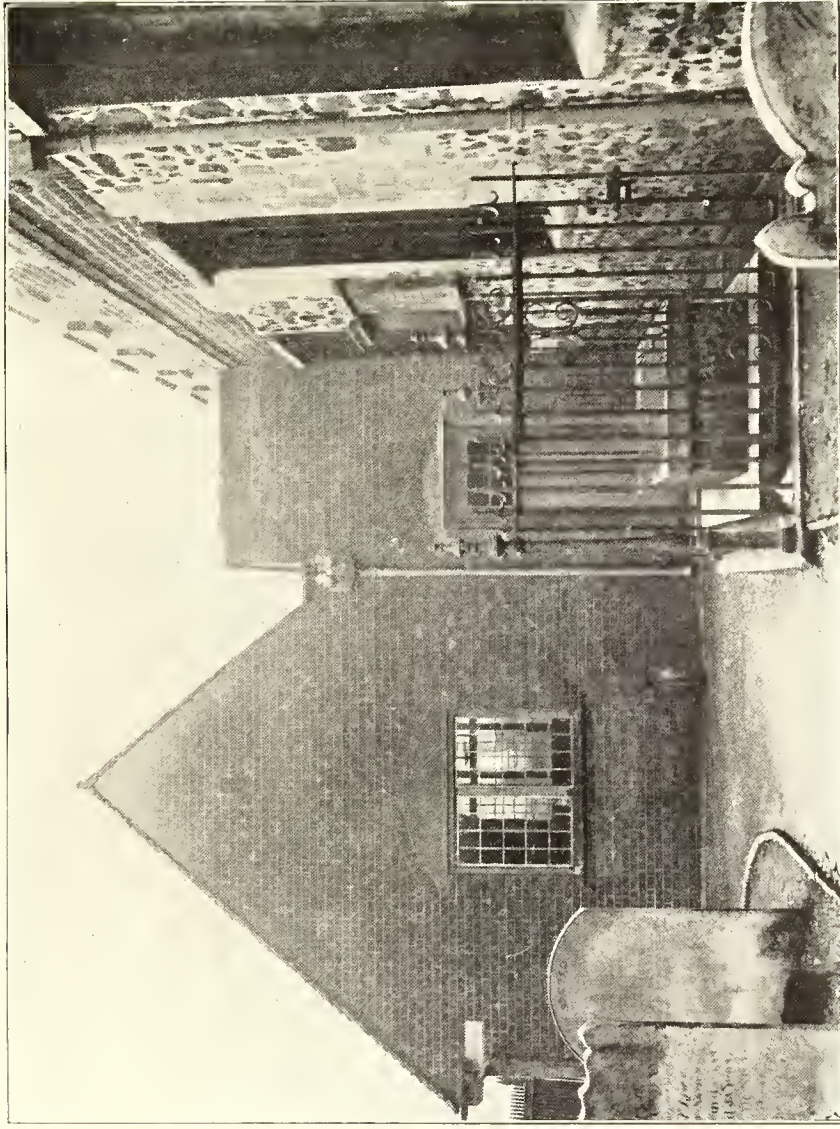
* *C. Mitchell, The Master Mason.*

VI.



The North Aisle Wall and Old Vestry.

VII.



The new Vestry, designed by the S.P.A.B.

XII.



Detail of the West Doorway and Window,
before the restoration, showing the decayed
condition of the work.

XIII.



The Newly-Discovered Window Tracery
in the Tower.

XIV.



Stonework of Turret and North Aisle Battlement
showing a previous restoration.

XV.



The South-East Buttress of the Chancel
showing the fracture and settlement.

XV*a*.



The South-West Buttress of the Tower.

The plumb-line shows the extent of the decay
of the past four centuries.

interesting discovery was made. About 5 ft. 6 in. from the floor level was a splayed red brick window opening* with an oaken lintel very much decayed, & a foot above that, built into the wall, was another oak scantling. The inside of the opening, which was 7 ft. 6 in. high by 5 ft. wide, was filled with the remains of 15th century window tracery, mullions, and jambs; very much chipped and broken, but still bearing the workman's tool marks, and on one side a thick coat of whitewash. A portion of a moulded door jamb, some remains of more modern windows and a few small blocks of firestone and chalk, filled up the remainder of the window, which was thickly plastered over. The new doorway is in brown bed Portland.

The existing windows in this wall are modern and are built of Portland stone of good quality, but mixed here and there with a soft freestone, which, having perished, has been replaced. The mortar used in the construction of this wall was found to be very firm, except where it was open to attacks from the weather through the decay of the outer face. The wall is two feet thick at the present ground level.

Windows

The red brick battlements were capped with moulded Hollington† and Bath stone coping (the latter probably original) most of which fell to pieces on being removed, and which has been replaced with Portland. The Hollington stones have for the most part been retained.

Battlements

The south aisle wall is 2 ft. 5 in. in thickness and has a Portland stone facing. A few of the original ragstone quoins still remain at the western end. It was during the recent repair of these that the mason found a few fragments of window mouldings embedded in the thickness of the wall. The Portland stone ashlar with which the battlements are faced, is exceedingly thin, in some instances being not more than 2½ in., backed with loose rubble of poor quality. This has been removed and replaced with sound stone without disturbing the exterior face, except where absolutely necessary. The battlement at the South West angle has been rebuilt. Both aisles have flat plastered ceilings with deal rafters and are covered with lead.

South Aisle

The chancel is built of ragstone rubble, coursed externally. There is also much chalk and flint in the interior of the walls. The old mortar is generally of excellent quality, except on the south side, the upper part of which was one mass of rubbish. The east gable has long been covered with a thick growth of ivy, which, though very picturesque, wrought great havoc in the walls. Hundreds of birds made this part of the church their nesting-place, & during the recent renovation several cart-loads of litter were removed from behind the stones of the ashlar face.

Chancel

* See Chap. I. p. 16.

† Staffordshire.

The battlements were found to be in so precarious a condition as to necessitate their being practically rebuilt, a very large proportion of the original ragstone ashlar was refixed. The S.E. angle fell during the progress of the work and has been rebuilt. In a mortar joint in the adjoining battlement a copper coin of the reign of George III., bearing the crowned harp and the legend "Hibernia," date 182-, was discovered, proving a partial restoration early in the century.

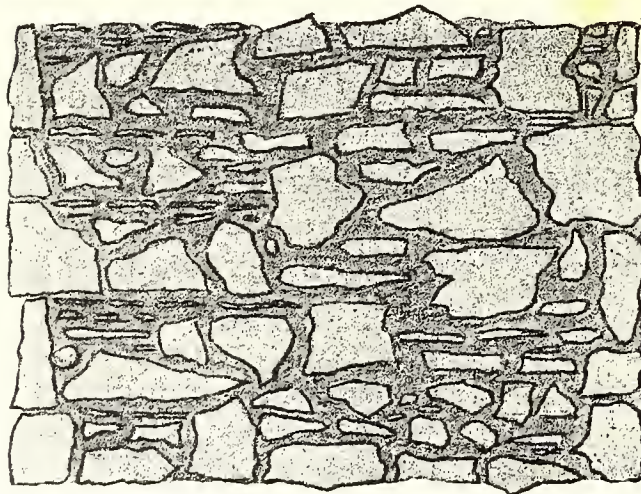
The corner buttress* at this same angle had no foundation whatever, and was fractured its whole length; the N.E. angle buttress was also several inches out of plumb and was badly cracked for half its length, from the top weathering downwards. Both buttresses have been rebuilt, many of the old quoins being retained in their former positions.

The window on the south side is of good Portland stone. Formerly the outer members were of Chilmark very badly constructed, they are now of brown bed Portland. On the inside, the ragstone relieving arch has been rebuilt & a new key-stone inserted. Immediately above this window, extending from the wall plate downwards and striking off towards the angle of the building, was an old fracture; this was well syringed out and grouted, bond stones being built across both externally and internally. The square headed window on the north side is built of Portland, and the large east window of Bath stone.

The oak-panelled timbers of the ceiling are well-preserved. New oak trusses now replace the old ones, & iron girders carry the wall plates and tie in the walls in place of the former beams, which had so far decayed as to render them useless.

The chancel walls are 2 ft. 1 in. in thickness at the present ground level, & are still slightly out of plumb. The red brick gable was seven inches out of the perpendicular and the Bath stone coping was very loose & rotten.

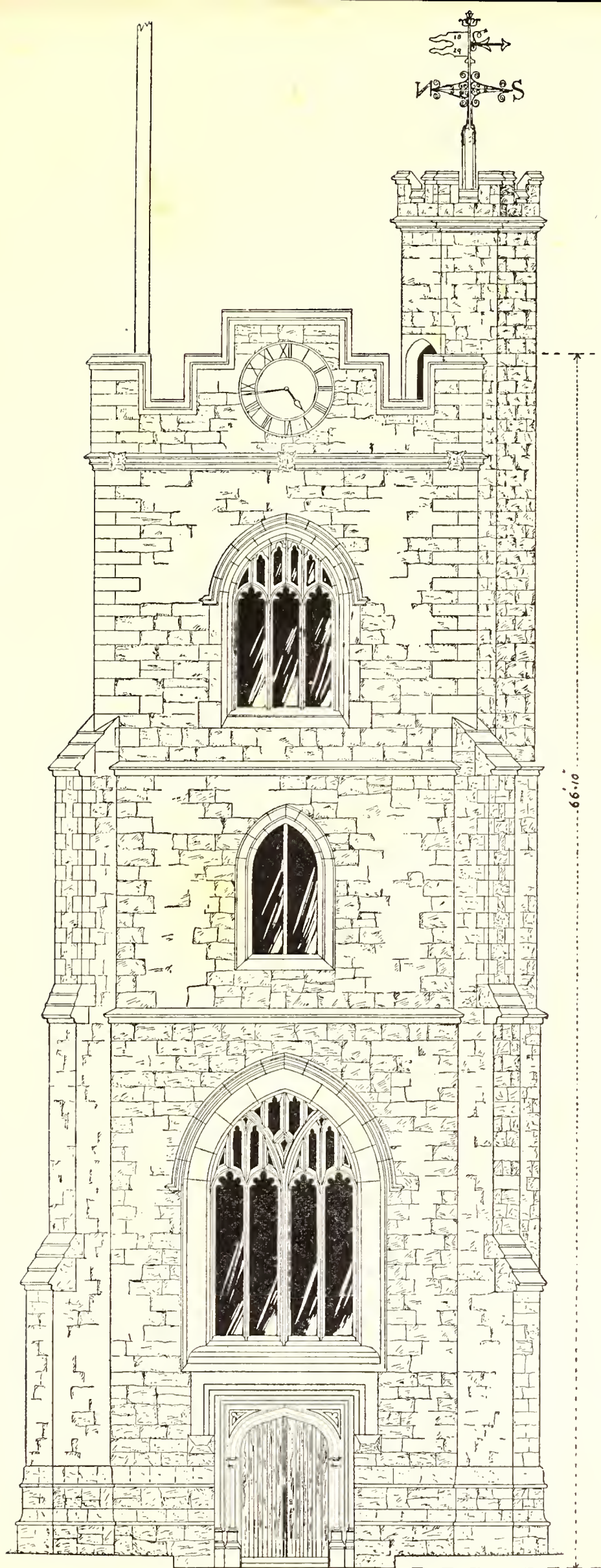
The Tower



The tower, the most important feature of the church, is massively built, being 66 ft. 10 in. high by about 23 ft. 2 in. square; the turret at the south-east angle rises another 10 ft. 3 in. above the tower battlements. At the ground level the walls are 5 ft. 7 in. thick; at the level of the ringers' chamber 4 ft. 2 in., and at the belfry windows 3 ft. in thickness. The exterior face is almost entirely of ragstone, but

internally firestone is much employed.

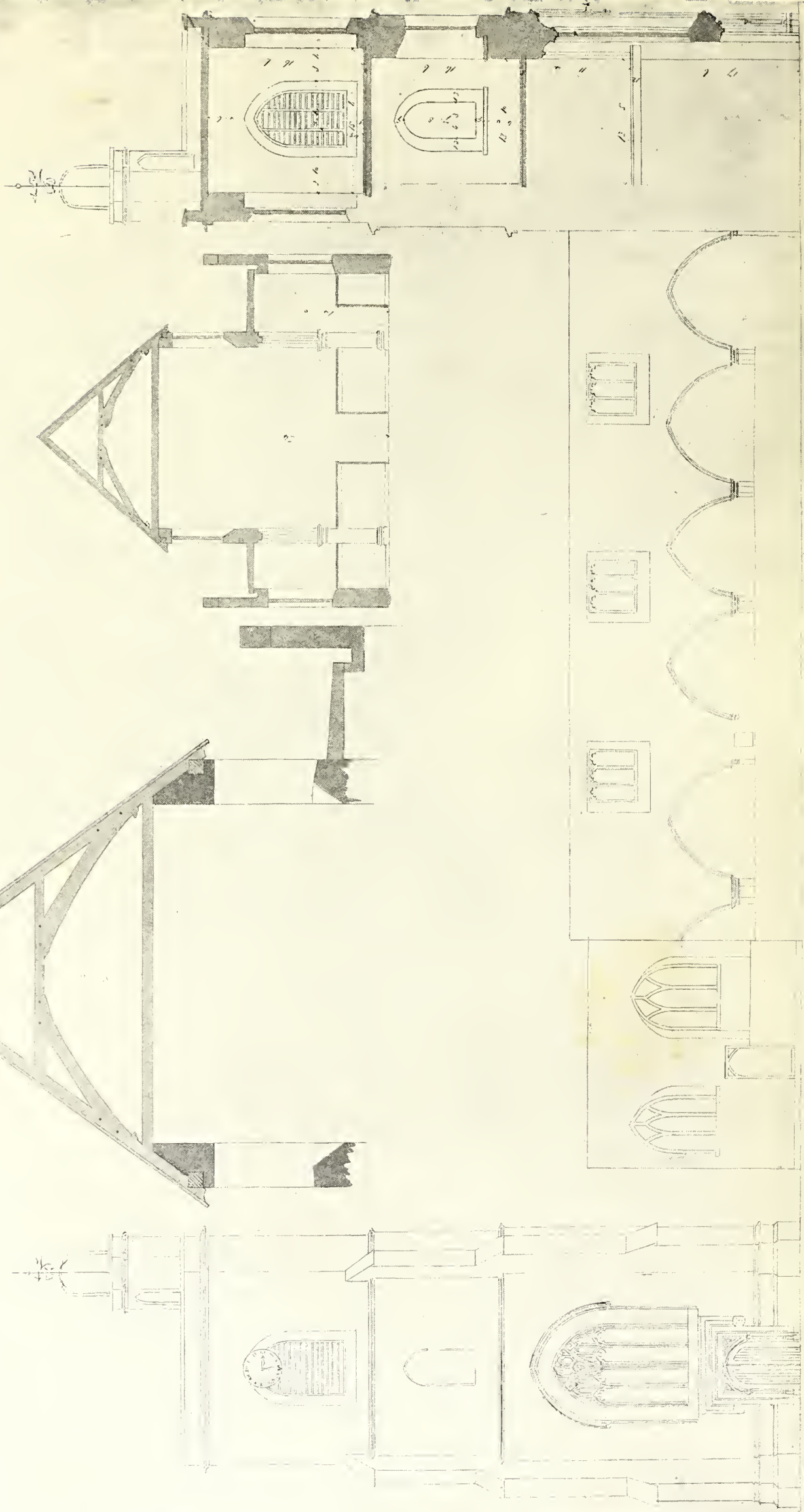
* See illustration, plate 15, page 19.



IX.
West Elevation of
the Tower. From a
drawing dated 1888.

X.

4. 1/2" - 6 x 8 1/2" flat
 Collis Barn 8 1/2 x 5 1/2
 11. 2" Door - 3 1/2
 No 46 Waller over Church -
 Ribby H. H. - 7 x 3 -



The two western buttresses are exceptionally narrow, being about 2 ft. across for a base projection of 4 ft. 9 in., and a height of 47 feet; and have little or no bond into the main wall. In the lower bay of the tower a very great number of the stones are bedded on oyster shells. Until the restoration the upper halves of the N.W. and N.E. buttresses were badly fractured; the former for 6 feet and the latter for 10 feet below their respective topmost water tablings; the latter also bulged slightly. Many of the stones in the buttresses, as well as in the main walls of the tower have the appearance of massiveness; but in many cases a stone which measures over four feet in length on the external face, is but five or six inches in thickness, and occasionally even less than that. To give an example of the loose method of constructional masonry employed in the church—the N.W. buttress had but eight internal quoins in the northern angle & nine in its western angle, for a height of 47 feet; while the S.W. buttress had eleven and five in its western and southern angles, respectively. Practically the whole of the ashlar face above the west window had become separated from the interior rubble, on account of this same looseness of bond. A great heap of litter was taken from behind the masonry here; while the back of the hood mould of the west window was completely honeycombed by the ubiquitous London sparrow.

The upper bay of the tower is built of coursed Kentish rag externally, & rubble internally. The belfry windows, quoins, coping stones, and string course, are in Derbyshire grit. The stone is of good quality; but the mortar is not so good as that employed in the older work, the joints there being much closer and the masonry geometrically accurate & the whole thoroughly well built. The battlements, however, and that part of the turret above the tower do not appear to have been built with the same care.

The N. and S. windows in the Ringer's Chamber had been bricked up for many years; the outside being stuccoed and jointed to imitate stone. It is to this that we owe the preservation of so much of the original tracery. The exterior Portland stone arches belong to a previous restoration.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY MORTAR IN BOW CHURCH.

THE following extracts are taken from an Article on "The Chemical Examination of Mortar," by H. F. Hills, F.C.S., which was published in "The Builder" of Sept. 17, 1898.

"The sample of Bow Church mortar taken for analysis was from a joint in the chancel wall, & is believed to have been made when the wall was first erected in A.D. 1480-1490. The joint was in too good a condition

to justify penetrating into it to any great depth, but the extreme exterior surface was avoided.

“Comparing the analysis of this mortar with Mr. Hughes’ analyses (of mortars from the ancient abbeys and castles of the British Isles) it is found that Corfe Castle possesses the mortar which most nearly approaches it in composition, thus:

Probable date of erection about A.D.						Bow Church. 1480-1490.	Corfe Castle. 1000.
Water (lost at 212° F.)	-	-	-	-	-	4.48	2.42
Water of combination	-	-	-	-	-	3.30	4.02
Lime	-	-	-	-	-	26.55	31.05
Magnesia	-	-	-	-	-	.31	.28
Potash	-	-	-	-	-	—	.20
Soda	-	-	-	-	-	—	.15
Oxide of iron	-	-	-	}			.95
Alumina	-	-	-			4.00	.15
Sulphuric anhydride	-	-	-	-	-	4.86	.26
Carbon dioxide	-	-	-	-	-	18.47	22.86
Chlorine	-	-	-	-	-	—	.65
Gelatinous silica, soluble in alkali	-	-	-	-	-	8.37	7.50
Insoluble matter (sand)	-	-	-	-	-	29.28	29.51
Other matter and loss	-	-	-	-	-	.38	—
						100.00	100.00

“According to Mr. Hughes, the mortar of Corfe Castle is one of the best mortars examined by him, but the above analysis shows that Bow Church mortar is of an equally good quality. It is remarkable that Mr. Hughes did not find as much as 1.5 per cent. of sulphuric anhydride in any of the ancient mortars, whereas Bow Church mortar contained 4.86 per cent. This may have been present in the lime originally used, or partly present in the water used for mixing the mortar, or it may have been absorbed from the atmosphere through the agency of rain water. The sand when separated from the calcareous portion of the mortar appeared to be of good quality, the grains being irregular in size, & for the most part having sharp edges.

“It must be remembered that most of the carbon dioxide, the combined water, and possibly of the sulphuric anhydride, has been absorbed since the lime and sand were mixed. Deducting these three constituents, and

calculating the percentage proportions of the remaining compounds, the analysis appears thus:

						Bow Church Mortar (on quicklime basis).
Moisture	-	-	-	-	-	6.10
Insoluble silicious matter	-	-	-	-	-	39.91
Silica, soluble in alkali	-	-	-	-	-	11.41
Lime	-	-	-	-	-	36.19
Magnesia	-	-	-	-	-	0.42
Oxide of iron and alumina	-	-	-	-	-	5.45
Other matter and loss	-	-	-	-	-	.52
						<hr/> 100.00

“The proportions of sand and lime used were probably (roughly) one of sand to one of lime.”

THE COMPOSITION OF THE BUILDING STONE.

THE following article from the “Architect,” Vol. LX, p. 146, corroborates the opinion that the stone employed in the original structure was most probably Kentish ragstone:

THE STONE IN OLD BOW CHURCH.

By Harold F. Hills, F.C.S.

“Much difference of opinion has recently been expressed as to the nature and source of the stone used in the construction of the oldest existing portion of Bow Church (1480—90 A.D.), that Mediæval building in East London which since 1896 has remained closed on account of its dangerous condition, and is now about to be restored.

“With a view to gaining, if possible, some conclusive information on the subject, the writer has subjected some pieces of the stone to careful chemical analysis, in order that the composition of a specimen might be compared with the published analyses of the building stones from the various English quarries.

“A difficulty has, however, been encountered owing to the fact that even our most modern text-books publish only a few analyses made sixty years ago for the Royal Commission on the Selection of Stones for the Houses of Parliament, and the solitary analysis of Kentish ragstone and hassock made by Phillips for Whichcord’s paper on ‘Ragstone’ in 1846.

“Careful search through the literature dealing with building stone dur-

ing the last half-century reveals very few additional analyses, and the comparison cannot therefore be as complete as might be desired. Nevertheless, the results are interesting, and indicate very strongly that the stone is in all probability Kentish ragstone, as will be seen by the following figures:

Stone.	Weight of a Cubic Foot.	Per cent. bulk of Water absorbed as compared with bulk of Stone.	Silicious Matter.	Carbonate of Lime.	Lime present in other Forms.	Carbonate of Magnesia.	Oxides of Iron and Aluminium.	Water of Combination and Volatile Matter.	Moisture.	Sulphuric Anhydride (SO ₃).
Bow Church, N. chancel wall	165·8	6·4	7·50	88·75	0·10	1·05	1·80	0·05	0·60	trace
Bow Church, base of tower -	168·3	5·0	6·70	86·07	0·40	0·44	2·20	1·60	0·42	0·20
Kentish rag (Whichcord)	166	1·3	6·5	—	92·6	—	0·5	0·4	—	—

“No other published analysis compares so closely with the composition of the Bow Church stone as that of Kentish rag quoted by Whichcord, & although the percentage amount of water absorbed by Kentish rag (taken from Rivington’s ‘Notes’) appears to be less, this is accounted for by the fact that the Bow Church stone showed signs of decay, and as a limestone decays it becomes more porous.

The Effect of London Air.

London Atmosphere

“In order to ascertain whether the composition of the surface of the stone had been affected by the East London atmosphere, some surface scrapings were taken from the same spot in the chancel wall as the sample of stone previously analysed, and it was found the sulphuric anhydride had risen from a mere trace to 7·78 per cent., while the amount of ‘volatile matter and combined water’ had risen from 0·05 to 2·24 per cent.

“These results corroborate those of Dr. Voelcker, who in 1864 showed that house soot contains sulphate of ammonia, and that this sulphate of ammonia converts limestone (carbonate of lime) into sulphate of lime, and stated that in the presence of moisture the sulphate of lime ‘takes up water of crystallisation, and thereby leads to exfoliation of the stone.’”

XXV.



The Old Fourteenth Century Font.

XXVI.



The “New Font” of 1624.

CHAPTER III. AN ACCOUNT OF THE MONUMENTS, INTERNAL FITTINGS AND FURNITURE OF THE CHURCH.

THE old font is now carefully preserved in the north-west corner of the aisle. It is evidently of considerable merit, and a good piece of 15th century work; octagonal in shape with a quatrefoil carved on each side of the bowl. It is unfortunately so decayed as to render the task of deciphering the various designs & the lettering next to impossible, and the illustration of it in the extra illustrated copy of Lysons' "Environs of London," in the Guildhall Library, is not quite reliable, though the base shown therein is doubtless more correct than the cement restoration now to be seen.

The Fonts

The newer font is of Italian Renaissance character and is of marble. No record exists showing when or how it was acquired, but from its character and also from a marginal note to be seen in the old registers, its date may with tolerable certainty be attributed to 1624. The entry in question is as follows: "The font new set up. This the first child christened," and the date given is October 17th of the above year. The font is oval in shape, and is in excellent preservation.

Owing to the introduction of this new font the old one was relegated to an out-of-the-way corner of the church for about a century. Then it experienced several changes of fortune. First of all it was sent across to the workhouse yard opposite and used as a flower stand. Thence it was rescued through the intervention of the churchwardens, brought back to the church and placed in the chancel. At the Induction Service of 1880 it was again driven forth and found its way to a builder's yard near the church. Upon the death, a few years later, of the builder, who was also churchwarden at the time, the font was planted in the churchyard among the tombstones, the stem or base being buried about a foot in the ground. In the year 1891 it was again allotted a corner within the sacred edifice. At the present moment it has been removed from the church by a firm of sculptors and marble masons, for repairs.

The tables now in use in the respective vestries have both served for a number of years as communion tables. That in the clergy vestry is the finer piece of work. It is of oak, with spiral triplet legs and an inlaid top; the whole being polished. Its date is unknown, but it is probably of last century, and took the place of the table now in the choir vestry which is

*Communion
Tables*

of the Stuart period in character, and probably is of the same date as the new font, though this is conjecture. In 1892, however, when altar frontals were first used at Bow, the then rector discarded the newer table and again used the older one, which was lengthened and heightened, though somewhat crudely. It has now been reduced to its original dimensions, but still bears the marks of the alteration.

The Communion Rail

Until the reseating in 1887 the communion rail ran round three sides of the table as shown on the older plans. The panelled recesses on each side (answering to the sedilia in other churches) were used (though not without protests from some) for the choristers' hats, overcoats, and umbrellas. The seats themselves could be lifted & formed a sort of box or cupboard which was used at one time for storing all sorts of rubbish. In the cleansing and reseating in 1891 under the supervision of Sir Arthur Blomfield, A.R.A., the altar rail was continued straight across the chancel, the latter raised to its present level, and the existing tiles laid. It was not, however, till the present year that, by the munificence of the present rector, the new carved oak altar and re-table, the dossal, altar carpets, & choir seats, were added.

The Carved Oak Chairs

The church possesses two very fine examples of carved oak chairs. They were obtained by the rector and churchwardens in 1857 or 1858. There appears to be no other record than this.

The Pulpit

A reference to the plans of 1824 and 1828 shows alterations in the position of the pulpit. In fact, on no two plans are the positions identical. The earliest position seems to have been about one-third of the way down the church against one of the piers of the north arcade. This pier was much wider, but was subsequently reduced to its present dimensions. Without doubt the well-known three-decker oak pulpit was retained in one position or another until well into the present century.

In 1836 this pulpit was altered, the seats for the clerk and minister being nearly on the same level beneath the pulpit. The three-decker was again altered a few years later, thus forming a simple moulded panelled pulpit. It will hardly be believed nowadays that in consequence of the oak becoming rather dark and gloomy in comparison with the new pews of this date, it was painted, grained, and varnished in a poor imitation of new oak. The last the writer saw of this pulpit was in a music hall opposite the church; it had been cut down and was apparently used as a pay-desk.

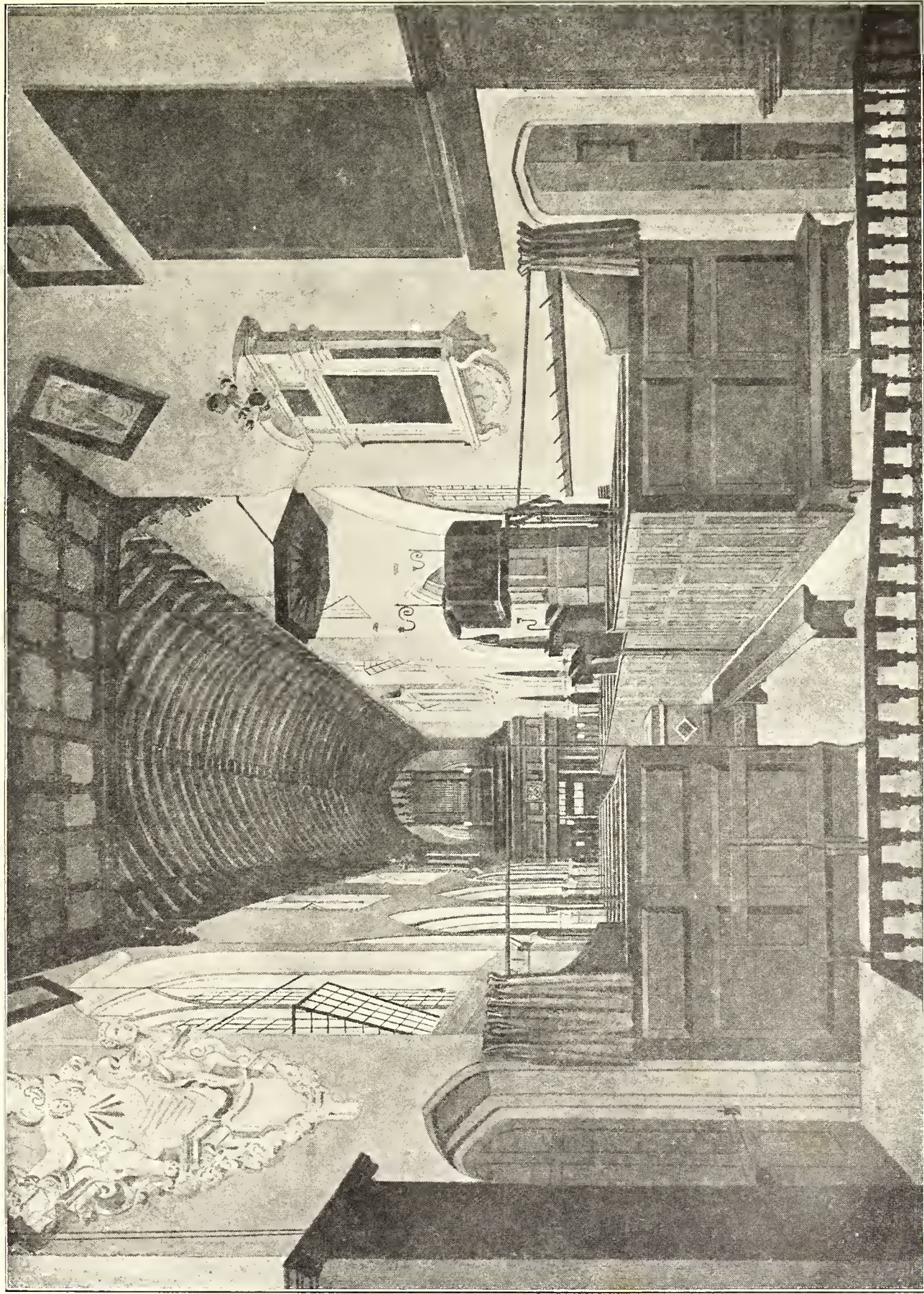
The present pulpit is of oak, very light, and it stands upon a stone base which is hardly so good as the pulpit itself. The pulpit base bears the inscription:

"To the glory of God. Presented by George William Allan as a thankoffering, 1887."



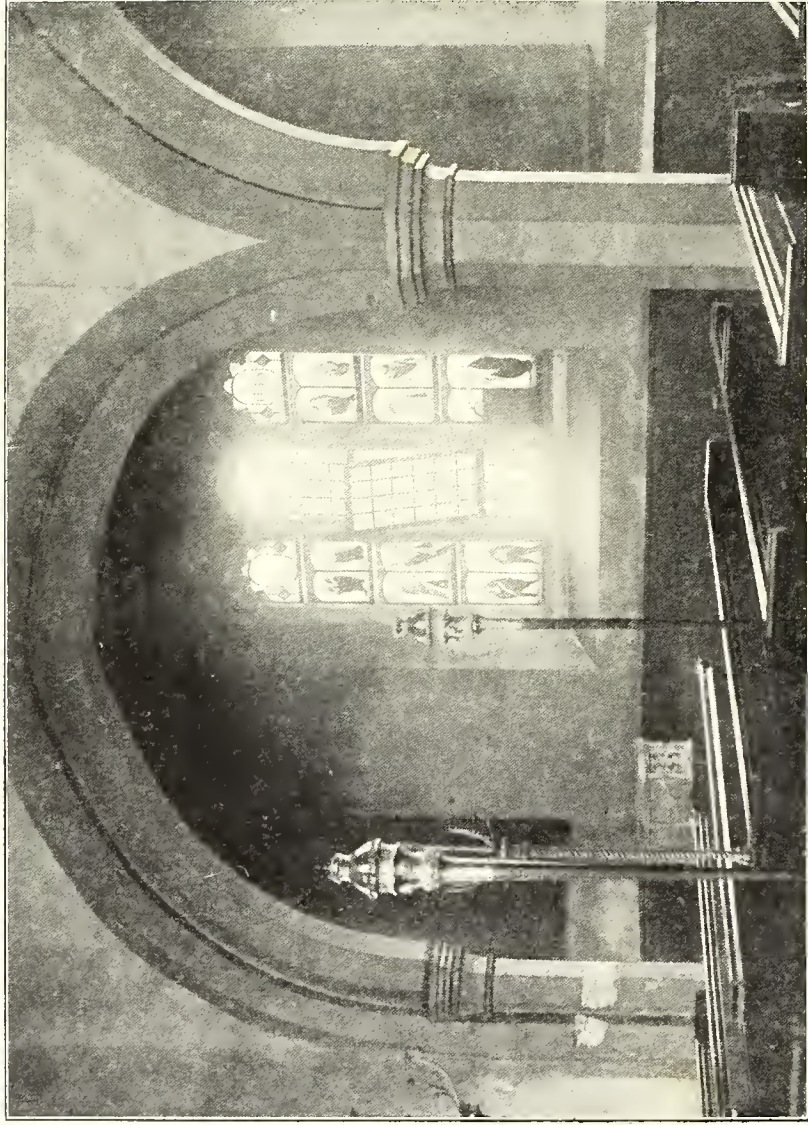
The Interior, looking Eastward, in 1849.

From a water-colour drawing kindly lent by the Rev. G. T. Driffield, M.A.



The Interior, looking Westward, in 1849.

From a water-colour drawing kindly lent by the Rev. G. T. Driffield, M.A.



The "Apostles'" Window and the Churchwardens' Maces.

The following minute* is evidence of the origin and date of an earlier organ: *The Organ*

1762. *Sunday.* *October 3rd.*
At this meeting Mr. Alexander Hill, the churchwarden, proposed to make a present of an Organ, to be put in the Church for the use of the Parish; and Mr. Benjamin Wayne was chosen Organist unanimously at a salary of £20 per annum, to be paid out of the monies arising from the Bills and Ground.
Present: The Rector, 1 Churchwarden, 2 overseers, 4 Vestrymen.

A faculty was obtained and the organ duly set up.

This I believe to have been a very small instrument whose long keys were black and short keys white, the reverse of the ordinary modern key-board. It is said to have been brought from some neighbouring tea-gardens. It was replaced early in the present century by Messrs. J. W. Walker & Sons, who constructed a new instrument in the gallery. In the year 1887, by the generosity of the widow of the late churchwarden,† this small organ was partly rebuilt and modernized. It is much to be regretted that the fashion of 1870 should have led to the construction of a chamber which effectually detracts from such good qualities as the organ possesses.

The seating has been altered so often that it is difficult to regard any one arrangement as permanent or characteristic in the church. High-backed pews, well-cushioned, and some with little curtains, were in vogue in the early half of the present century. A curious little drawing is still to be seen in one of the vestries showing a plan of the seats in 1804. No knowledge remains of what existed at an earlier date. The Restoration Committee has now provided chairs. *The Seats*

The church unfortunately possesses one large stained glass window. It is garish in colour, hard and unpleasing in outline, and of no artistic merit. This is the east window, inserted some thirty years since to the memory of members of the Soutter family. It is said that the then rector would not tolerate either figures or symbols, but even that is hardly sufficient excuse for the production now seen. *The East Window*

The only good original window in the church is at the west end. This is an excellent example of the architecture of the period, viz., about 1480. It is filled in with clear glass with the exception of two lights of (probably seventeenth century) enamelled glass representing Moses and Aaron respectively. These, with the twelve enamelled glass lights of the same *The West Window*

* From copies of the minutes in the possession of Mr. H. L. Wheatley, parish clerk.

† Wm. Bangs.

character (in the western-most window of the north aisle) representing the twelve apostles, were all taken from the east window to make room for the above-mentioned stained glass.

It is said* that at one time the east window was entirely blocked & light obtained only by the north and south windows of the chancel. About 1818 (when only the lower portion of the window was bricked up) the enamelled glass, referred to below, was inserted, while the large boards containing the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments were immediately underneath, facing the congregation, in the position now occupied by the dossal.

Upon the minutes of the Select Vestry will be found the following entry:

1758

Sunday

2nd July.

At a meeting of the Select Vestry it is ordered that the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Decalogue be paint, gild and write the characters on the Glory, the whole to be in gold for the sum of Twelve pounds Five shillings and at the same time Nathaniel Sawyer was ordered to wash, white wash and colour the ceilings and walls of the Church as before for the sum of Three pounds.

Maces

About the year 1855, during the churchwardenship of Mr. Goddard, a pair of maces, purporting to be of solid silver, were purchased for £75. Unfortunately their intrinsic value is small as it has been proved that the metal used was pewter, not silver. The maces bear neither date nor mark upon them. The workmanship is skilful, and they doubtless lent a touch of picturesqueness to many a ceremony at which Mr. Goddard and his successors, officiated. They may be seen in plate No. 23, opposite p. 27.

The Bells

The church has eight bells, five given in 1760, each of which is thus inscribed:

*"John Cook, Esquire, collar-maker to His Majesty,
The Principal subscriber."*

"Lester & Pack of London, fecit, 1760."

The next in point of age is inscribed as follows:

"The Rev. Mr. Allan Harrison Eccles, M.A., Rector.

*Mr. Richard Lovelidge, } Church Wardens, S. Mary Stratford, Bow.
Mr. John Giles, }*

"Thos. Mears of London, fecit 1797."

A small bell, sometimes termed the "priest's bell," and sometimes the "sanctus bell," was added in 1821, and bears the following inscription:

"J. Rose, R. E. Crawley, Church Wardens, 1821."

* *Mr. H. L. Wheatley.*

XXVII.



The Amcotts and Wylford Brass.

The remaining two bells are dated 1858, but who gave them does not appear. The Rev. George Townshend Driffeld, Rector, and Godfrey Goddard, Richard Walter Crawley, Church Wardens, are the names inscribed, and

“*S. Mears, Founder, London, 1858.*”

Though not the “Bow bells” which can claim to have recalled Dick Whittington with a chime so prophetic of his future greatness, still there are few peals which can send forth a sweeter or more melodious chime.

MONUMENTS

The church is not rich in monuments that can claim to have more than a local interest. No doubt this is accounted for by the fact that Bow being (until last century) merely a chapel-of-ease to Stepney, the local celebrities preferred to be interred in their parish church.

Monuments

Among the few men of note connected with Bow Church are found the following names, extracted chiefly from Lyson’s “Environs of London”: Sir William Furnival died 1383. Edmund, Lord Sheffield of Spanish Armada fame; John le Neve, author of “*Monumenta Anglicana*”; and Dr. Samuel Jebb, an eminent physician, who published a life of Mary Queen of Scots and other works, all lived in Bow.

Monuments* did at one time exist in the church to the memory of:

Thomas Beaufix, Justice of Peace and Coroner, 1458.

Henry Wilson, of Oldford, 1502.

John Tate, 1508.

Richard Gray, 1532.

These monuments have, however, completely disappeared and I have failed to ascertain what position they occupied or anything about them. The oldest remaining monument and the one with perhaps the most artistic merit, is a brass on the wall of the south aisle. It has two shields bearing respectively the arms of Amcotts and Wylford, thus:

*The Amcotts
and Wylford
Brass*

I. Amcotts. Quarterly of eight:—

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. <i>Arg.</i> a tower bet. 3 covered cups <i>ar.</i> | Amcotts. |
| 2. <i>Arg.</i> a fesse bet. 3 escallops <i>gu.</i> | Sutton. |
| 3. Barry of 8 <i>a.</i> and <i>g.</i> a lion saliant <i>su.</i> | Wasthouse. |
| 4. <i>Gu.</i> gutty <i>arg.</i> a castle triple towered <i>or.</i> | Hawburgh. |
| 5. <i>Gu.</i> on a bend <i>arg.</i> double cotised 3 escallops <i>sa.</i> | |
| 6. <i>Arg.</i> on a bend cotised <i>sa.</i> 3 griffin’s heads erased of the field, beaked <i>or.</i> | Sawley. |
| 7. Barry of 6 <i>gu.</i> and <i>erm.</i> | Kirton. |
| 8. <i>Arg.</i> 3 annulets <i>gu.</i> bet. 2 bendlets <i>sa.</i> | Dawery. |

* *Lysons.*

II. Amcotts, quarterly of eight, as above, impaling *Gu.* a chevron engrailed charged with a crescent of the field, between 3 lion's faces.

The blazoning of the first shield is copied from Lysons, but his description of the second is quite inaccurate, and is as given above. The charges on both shields are now indistinct both in colour and form. Underneath is the following inscription in black letter:—

Here under lyeth buried Grace the Dowgther of Mr. John Wylford (late Alderman of London) and whylle she lyuyd the wyffe of John Amcotte of the same ciette, fyshemonger, by whom he had II sones named Hamond and Harry and a daughter namyed Grace the which Grace the Mother decessyd the XIII of July and her sonne Hamond decessyd ye VI of August folloying in Ao dni 1551, and lyethe buried with his mother whose dethes and vertuous end have ye in Remembrawns in Callyng to ye Lyuyng God for ye forgyveness of yor synnes.

Though very small this monument is intricately carved as will be seen in the illustration,* and is an excellent example of the work of the Tudor period.

The Jordan Monument

In striking contrast to the last is the monument to the memory of Thomas Jordan, 1671, fixed on the north wall of the chancel. In design it is eminently of the Stuart period and well executed in marble.

On a shield in the pediment above the inscription are the arms *sab.* an eagle displayed in bend *or.* cotised *arg.*; Lysons also adds, a canton *or.* in sinister chief, but this is now obliterated, and the whole blazoning of shield much defaced. The shield is surmounted by a helmet bearing the crest, a hound sejant rampant, and mantling. Both the helm & mantling are decorated with colour, part of the helm being gilded.

The Summers Monument

In 1704 a simple tablet of small size was erected and may still be seen on the wall of the south aisle containing the following inscription:

This Stone is erected to the Memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Summers, Widow of Mr. Samuel Summers, of this Parish. She was a kind Neighbour, a good Christian, and a constant friend to the Poor. By her Last Will and Testament she ordered the Sum of Two Hundred Pounds to be invested in some Parliamentary Funds, upon this special Trust, that the Interest and Produce thereof be annually distributed on New Years Day to the Poor of this Parish for ever. She died the 26th of June 1764 aged 95 years.

The Walker Monument

Very different is the next monument, to John Walker, 1707; it is very large, and most elaborately carved. In addition to busts of the departed, there are cherubs, weeping boys, a death's head and several skulls, carved

* *Illustration No. 27, p. 29.*

wreaths and flowers, drapery, scrolls, and a coat of arms. The shield formerly bearing these arms is now quite bare; it was fixed separately on the front of the upper part of the monument. The arms are given by Lysons as follows: On a chevron between 3 crescents, as many amulets, quartering 3 peacocks—the coat of Peacock of Finchley.

The inscription reads:

Sup. Hoc. Tumulo.
Obdormit Jacobus Walker Armicer
mercator integerrimus.
Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ decus: expers doli,
singulari cum humanitate omnes tractavit
prole utriusq^e generis beatus;
Pater vere facillimus. In amicos.
in pauperes, & præcipue in Clerum.
Liberalitate, et Charitate.
præ cæteris Insignis.
cum octoginta annos confecisset
invicta animi patientiâ,
intrepide piam animam efflavit
die Ian. xxviii. anno salutis mdccxii.
sita est etiam Dorothea
uxor prædicti Iac: Walker,
eximijs virtutibus, tam Animi
quam Corporis, ornata.
conjugi charissimo conjux charissima
mater indulgentissima.
in omnes amica. comis. affabilis.
mente. ac manu munifica.
hanc vitam (meliorem expectans)
placide commutavit Maij xxix die,
anno ætat xlvii. æræ xtianæ mdccvi.
ad Parentum perpetuam memoriam
Tho. Walker arm. fil natu max.
Hoc monumentum obsequij ergo
devotissime posuit,
et consecravit.

The monument of Thomas Rust on the wall of the south aisle is of very poor design, but it is of interest in its reference to one of the oldest and most important industries of the parish, viz., Dyeing. In Gascoyne's map of 1703, and other even older records, the dye works of Bow are noted. Indeed, it is comparatively recently that the works on the banks

*Rust Monu-
ment*

of the Lea, in the Old Ford Road, were swallowed up by the Midland Railway Company. The bulk of the industry had, however, long since migrated to other parts of the Metropolis.*

The stone is thus inscribed:

In hopes of a joyful Resurrection Under a Grave stone near this place lies deposited the Body of Thomas (son of Edward Rust Citizen and Draper of London and Scarlet Dyer of Oldford in this Parish by Elizabeth his Wife) who departed this life on the 12th day of June 1704 Aged 14 years.

Likewise

Elizabeth (wife of the said Edward Rust she was third daughter of Jarvis Day of Melton Mobree in the County of Leicester, Gent, by his first wife Elizabeth) who departed this life the 6th day of November 1706 Aged 55 years.

Also the said

Edward Rust (Youngest son of William Rust of Shirlington in the County of Bedford by Johanna his wife). He had by the said Elizabeth issue four sons viz: Edward and William (who died infants and are buried in the Parish of St. Catherine Creed Church London, Stephen his only surviving and the above said Thomas) He departed this life the 21st day of December 1724 in ye 64th year of his Age.

The said Stephen Rust departed this life the 9th day of March 1739 in the 56th year of his Age.

*The Alice
Coburne
Monument*

On the north wall of the nave stands the monument of Alice Coburne. Though far from beautiful it is well executed in white marble. It is surmounted by a bust of the deceased, and at the foot are three cherubs surrounding the Coburne arms:—On a lozenge shaped shield, *Arg.* on a chevron between 3 bugle horns *sa.* as many mullets *or.*—the arms of Foster, of whom her mother Mrs. Prisca Coburne was daughter.

The somewhat pedantic Inscription is as follows:

אזו שלטרו ביום חמות :

*Infra siti sunt cineres Aliciæ Coburne,
Filia unica Thomæ Coburne, gen, de Stratford Bow,
Quæ (Licet defunctâ inter pariendum matre, defuncto
item post mensibus Patre, tamen)*

**Pick's History of England, Vol. 3, p. 558, states that in 1643 a Dutchman established himself at Bow and taught the English the method of producing the fine scarlet dye for which foreign cloths were so much celebrated. An interesting article could be written on the ancient industries of the parish, not the least important of which was the manufacture of china; which business was finally purchased by Duesbury about 1750, when he transferred it to Derby.*

*inauditâ Novercæ Priscæ Coburne curâ liberaliter educata,
 cum attigisset annum decem quintum,
 Supra ætatem longe Prudentia optimisque animi
 dotibus ornata,
 supra quotidianas formas miris modis elegans et venusta,
 supra præceptis Philosophorum cunctis virtutis numeris
 absoluta,
 supra fidem omnibus æqua et benigna omnibus
 vicissim grata;
 Suorum denique deliciæ, spes sola Familiæ.
 Tandem ea erat vis Formæ ac virtutis,
 attraxit ad se amantem, (W—W—),
 Qui veniendo, videndo victus,
 eam solam sibi speravit uxorem, eam solam comitem vitæ,
 Thalamique participem.
 Prospera omnia procedere visa,
 cum inopinato variolarum morbo correpta,
 nupturiens puella, magno omnium cum luctu, amantis
 maximo, obiit (infandum obiit),
 viii scil. Maii Anno Christi nati mdclxxxix,
 Et ipssimis die Nuptiis destinatâ sepulta hic recubuit;
 Quasi mortali amplexui præponens Abrahami sinum.
 Ubi jam suavi obvoluta Requie, manet ἀνάστασις
 Iustorum:
 eo primum die visura terreno suo corpore corpora pulchriora,
 virtutem suâ, dum in vivis erat, perfectiorem;
 Amorem, vel suo erga Procum, vel proci erga seipsam
 ardentior.*
*In id tempus daret hoc quale monumentum,
 mæstissimi amatoris opus,
 dimidiâ tantum parte superstitis,
 memoriæ virginis τῆς μακαρίτιδος utriusque,
 amoris sacrum.*

The foregoing Inscription is translated into English verse, by the Rev. W. P. Insley, M.A.:

“Neither hath he power in the day of death.”—*Eccles.* viii. 8.

Beneath this tablet rests the mortal Form
 Of Alice Coburne, lov'd and only child
 Of Thomas Coburne, Gentleman, of Bow;
 Whose birth was purchased by a Mother's life,
 And ten months later felt a Father's loss.

Brought up with unexampled love and care
 By her kind foster-mother, Prisca Coburne,
 At fifteen years she showed so rare a grace
 Of mind and person, that she far excelled
 Those of her age and circle. Beauty, virtue, love,
 Religion, learning, kindness—all were hers;
 Pride of her friends, sole hope of House and Name.
 Ere long these many charms of mind and form
 Drew to her side a lover, (W.— W.—)
 Who came, saw and was conquered, and who fondly hoped
 That she, and she alone, would be his wife,
 His life's companion, partner of his couch.
 Heaven seemed to bless the union; and a future
 Gilded with dreams of happiness and love
 Seemed to await the pair; when soon, alas!
 That fell Destroyer of the human race,
 The black Disease,* seized the expectant bride;
 And to the unutterable grief of all her friends,
 But most of all of her distracted Lover,
 Death claimed the hapless maiden as his own;
 And on the self-same day that should have seen
 Her glad espousal, she was laid within
 This tomb; as tho' she had preferred
 A seat in Abram's bosom to the fond
 And warm embraces of a husband's love.
 There sweetly, gently sleeping waits she now
 The joyful *resurrection* of the Just;
 When shall her body change its mortal grace,
 Fair as it was, for one diviner far;
 When shall her soul be clothed with righteousness,
 And radiant with a glory, such as eye
 Hath ne'er in this terrestrial world beheld,
 Shall taste a richer, purer, holier love.
 Until that day may this poor monument,
 The mournful tribute of thy weeping Lover,
 Who feels that half his soul is from him torn,
 Stand, *Sainted* Maiden! sacred to thy mem'ry
 And our mutual love.

*The scripture text is the translation of the Hebrew heading, the italics that of
 the Greek and the rest of the Latin.*

* *The Small Pox.*

The last of the *old* monuments is that of Mrs. Prisca Coburne exactly opposite to that of her daughter which it slightly exceeds in size and ornament. The shield and arms are the same as on the monument of Alice Coburne.

*Mrs. Prisca
Coburne*

The inscription is written in English and runs as follows:

To ye memory of Prisca Coburne, widw. who lyeth buried in ye ille near this pillar and dyed ye 13th of Nov., 1701, and by her will dated ye 6th of May, 1701, gave ye charities follg. to ye poor inhabitants of this Hamblet, who have no pensions, to be paid as ye will mentions.

Then follows the enumeration of her various bequests for religious and charitable purposes. It may not be amiss to mention that Prisca Coburne, whose maiden name was Prisca Forster, and the record of whose baptism is found in our registers in the year 1622, was the daughter of one of the ministers of Bow, and appears to have been the widow of a brewer in the parish, where she was born and which she desired to benefit by her charities." *

The value of the sums left by Prisca Coburne to the parish of Bow for religious and charitable purposes was estimated a few years since as being equivalent to a capital sum of not less than £14,000.

Of the other monuments in the church all are modern, and, with one exception, call for little or no remark. The first, in order of age, is that erected to Jonathan Arnold who was buried at Dagenham; the second to George and Richard Crawley, twin brothers and members of one of the oldest remaining families in Bow; the third to James Harris, a former parish clerk; and the fourth to Mrs. Driffield, the first wife of the Rev. G. T. Driffield, rector of Bow, 1844—1879.

*Later Mon-
uments*

The exception alluded to above is the brass just erected in the south aisle to the memory of James Bernard Hunter, and relatives of his connected with the parish.

Hunter

Mr. Hunter was a member of the Restoration Committee, and took great interest in the work. His family have for more than three generations been well known in Bow, and the parish cannot but feel that it has lost an able supporter. The brass is above the spot where the family used, as children, to sit Sunday after Sunday. In the churchyard is to be seen the family tomb of the Hunters.

* *Insley.*

The brass bears the following inscription:

*In Loving Memory of
James Bernard Hunter, M.Inst.C.E.
of the firm of Hunter and English, Engineers, Bow;
who was born in this parish, Oct. 21, 1855,
and died at Hampstead, April 21, 1899.
“He was my friend faithful and just to me.”
Also of James Hunter, Father of the above, died May 6, 1883.
Also of Walter Hunter, Grandfather of the above, died Feb. 28, 1852.
Both of this parish.
“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,
even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours.”*

*External
Monuments*

Of the three external monuments two are little more than rectangular slabs to the memories respectively of Mrs. Joyce Hunt, spinster, who died in 1758, in her 83rd year; & Joseph Jones, who died in 1802, aged 72.* The third, however, which is affixed to the wall of the south aisle is of some historical interest, and states that it was erected to the memory of certain members of a family named Cook, collar makers to His Majesty, the last of whom, John Cook, died in 1763. The name of this John Cook is the one before referred to as appearing on the church bells, to the cost of which he was apparently a subscriber.

COMMUNION PLATE.

The Plate

THE following extracts are, by the kind permission of the author, from Mr. Edwin Freshfield's "Communion Plate of the Parish Churches in the County of London."

FLAGON

ht. 13 in.

dia. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in.

oz.

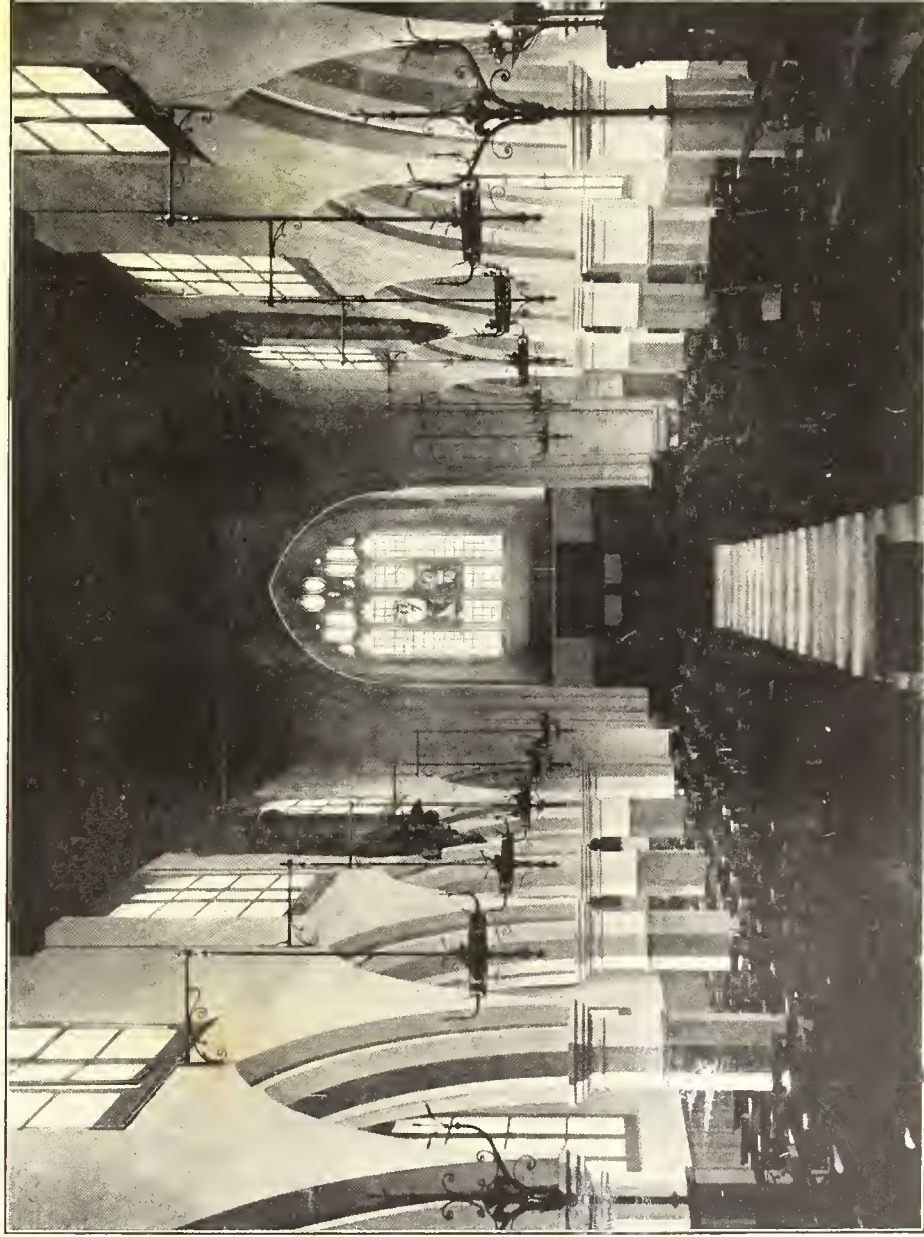
wt. 51



A silver flagon with the date mark for 1718 and a maker's mark FA crowned in a circular stamp; inscribed: "Dienatali Domini nostri Jesu Christi $\frac{1}{2}$ Decembris An: Salutis 1718 in usum Ecclesiæ parochialis de Stratford Bow hanc lagenam dono dedit et dicavit Rev: Vir Henricus Lambe, L.L.D., non ita pridem Ecclesiæ prædictæ Minister."

* Described on the stone as "a man from his birth almost deaf and dumb."

XVIII.

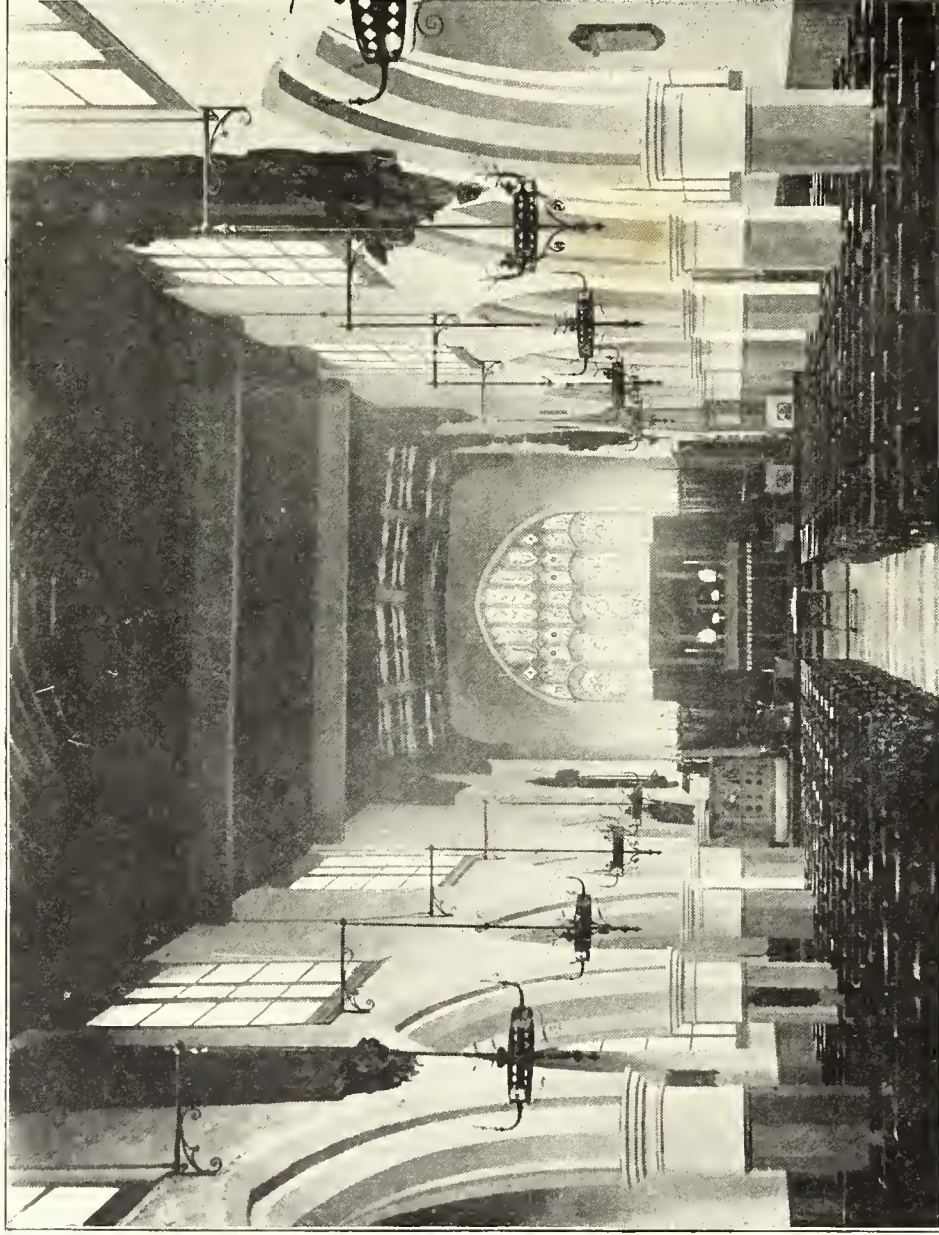


The Interior, looking Westward, in 1899.

XIX.



The Interior, looking Eastward; taken in 1896
immediately before the Church was closed.



The Interior, looking Eastward, in 1899.

CUPS AND COVERS ...



ht. of each gin.
dia. of each } bowl $3\frac{3}{4}$ in.
 } foot 4 in.

oz. dwt. oz. dwt.
wt. 15 17 & 14 8



Covers.

oz. dwt. oz. dwt.
wt. 4 16 & 4 5

PATEN

oz. dwt.

dia. $10\frac{1}{4}$ in. wt. 16 7

DISHES

dia. of each gin.

oz. dwt.

wt. of each 13 9

SPOON

dwt.

wt. 14

Two silver cups and paten covers. One cup and cover have the date mark for 1624 and a maker's mark T F in monogram in a plain shield; inscribed: "Vallantine Poole gave thre pounds towards this cup S. B." The other cup & cover have the date mark for 1813 and a maker's mark RE EB in a quatrefoil stamp; inscribed: "S Mary Stratford Bow 1813 Rev: Hamlet Harrison, Rector, Joshua Robins, Francis Jowers, churchwardens, William Lambert, John Gadsden, overseers."

A silver paten without marks; inscribed: "Ex dono Priscæ Colburn Ano: dni 1683 S. B."

Four silver dishes with the date mark for 1836 & a maker's mark C. R. G. S. with inscriptions showing that they were presented by the subscription of a few of the inhabitants in 1837, Johnson Gibson, Thomas Ansell, being churchwardens.

A silver spoon with perforated bowl, with the date mark for 1818, and a maker's mark G W; inscribed: "Francis Jowers, Charles Brett, churchwardens, Bow, A.D. 1818."

The maker's marks T F and F A will be found in Appendix A of *Old English Plate*, under dates 1609 and 1698 (part 2). The latter is there given as the mark of William Ffawdery. T F, a very common mark, will be found on church plate all over the City.

VAULTS.

None of the historians before quoted devote a single word to this subject and anyone perusing their writings would naturally conclude that no vaults existed. There are, however, several entries in the parish registers notifying burials in these vaults.

The vault under the nave will, upon reference to the plan, be seen to be of great length. It is over 60 feet long, 10 feet wide and 6 feet high in the centre. There are 50 coffins more or less intact: of these the inscriptions

The Vaults

of 17 were decipherable in 1891 when I entered the vault. The remaining 33 were mostly so placed that the inscriptions were hidden by the upper rows. Speaking generally, the coffins were situated one row on each side, parallel with the side walls and with the feet of the occupants turned towards the east. The coffin of Mrs. Harriet Johnson, who died in March, 1853, was left in the gangway near the entrance, as if it were known that no other interment would be made therein.

The oldest inscription deciphered was dated 1784, but this gives no clue to the age of the vault, for the south-east corner is partitioned off with a low brick wall in which is a stone bearing the inscription:

“Remains of bodies in wood coffins.”

Evidently more room had been required in some far-gone period, & the “remains” had been swept up and placed in the corner. The coffins are mostly stacked three or four deep one on top of the other, and the only inscriptions that could be seen were those at the top, and necessarily the most recent interments. In one case where the lower coffin had given way and let the upper two fall over sideways, an attempt was made to get to the date of the lower inscription, but it was found to be too far perished. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary it would appear that this vault is of the same date as the church. The first note of an interment I can find in the parish registers is 1552,* but these books go no farther back than 1538.

The entrance shown with the flight of steps is comparatively modern (1836) and is easily recognised by the letter V boldly incised on the north aisle wall. The original entrance was by an aperture in the floor of the nave at the western extremity of the vault. The construction is not unlike a low railway tunnel walled in at both ends. I very greatly regret that at the time of my visit (having then no intention of writing an account of the church) I took no notice of the brick-work, except that the bricks were red, hard, and set with excellent mortar. It is, unfortunately, impracticable to inspect the work again as the wood block floor on concrete covers the entire vault, and to re-open the vault without the previous consent of the Home Secretary is an indictable offence. The crown of the arch is only a few inches below the church floor.

The vault under the vestry is of the same date as the clergy vestry. Only eight coffins were found,† and one of them had crumbled away to dust and a perfect skeleton lay revealed. This was the only case in which no

* “*Nicholas Farkson Clarke was curate of ye chappel and deceased ye 26th day of July and lies buried in ye church.*”

† *Several entries in the registers prove that other bodies had been interred in this vault. These were probably all removed about a century ago to make room for fresh comers.*

lead coffin was found. As a rule the wood outer coffin had decayed save for a strip of wood here and there studded with brass-headed nails. There is in the register an entry to the effect that one of the Crawley family was first interred in this vault and afterwards re-interred in the family vault in the churchyard. Search has been made, but no other vault exists within the walls of the sacred edifice.

REGISTERS.

In 1538 an Act was passed requiring parish churches to keep registers of the births, marriages and deaths occurring in the parish. Bow was only a chapel-of-ease at this time, but it is quite in keeping with its constant attempt to assert its independence of Stepney, that it should at once start its own registers.

*The Church
Registers*

Unfortunately the books are not complete, though they will compare favourably in this respect with most of the neighbouring parishes. The records for the year 1780 to 1790 are missing, but beyond this there is a fairly continuous record from November 1538 to the present day, and it is from this source that we learn how many worthies have been connected with the place.

The earliest register appears to consist of several thin volumes bound together; thus we find several years (1538-1637) of weddings, then several of christenings, and finally the record of the burials. The year 1538 first occurs in the second part, viz., that allotted to baptisms. This is, no doubt, merely due to the erratic manner of the binding. The entries for nearly the whole of the first century are evidently in one handwriting, which proves it to be a copy and not the original.

In the earliest complete year (1539) there are recorded 18 baptisms, 12 weddings and 21 burials. This gives the impression of a small and decreasing population, but in those days the death rate afforded no true basis of calculation, as the tables of mortality fluctuated enormously with the appearance and disappearance of the plague. In 1577 there were 6 deaths from the plague, while in 1603 there were 89; but in many years there were none, so that the 21 deaths against 18 births in 1539 did not necessarily mean a falling population. In 1625 there were 102 burials (of which 30 are marked "plague") & in 1665 the number increased to 139, but none are marked as due to the scourge which was then sweeping England for practically the last time.

The following extracts from the registers, with a note here and there derived from other sources, may prove of interest. Should the reader desire to corroborate the following, or search for others, an application should be made to the parish clerk, who informs me that a charge is made "*of 1s. for the first year and 6d. for every other year.*" This would amount in all to £9 1s. if the whole of the registers were searched.

*Extracts of
interest*

Humphrey, Son of Sir Humphrey Brown, Knt., baptised 15th Dec., 1554.

John Harman, Esqre., one of the "gentilman hushers" of the chamber of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, and the excellent Lady Dame Dorothee Gwydott, widow, late of the town of Southampton, married Dec. 21st 1557.

Dugles, daughter of Henry Howard, Esq., baptized Jan. 29th, 1571-2. Note. This Henry Howard was afterwards the second Lord Howard of Brindon. Dugles (or Douglas) afterwards married Sir Arthur George.

Henry, Son of Henry Lord Howard baptized May 16th 1585. (He died in his infancy).

A poore boy was burryed ye 9th day of March, 1575.

Peter Cooy a poore man that died att ye Armitage in ye Bridge (1550).

A poore man that died in Thomas White's barn was burried ye 25th day of March (1551).

Cristian Stewart a woman was buried on Mary Magdalene's day (1551).

Nicholas Farkson Clarke was curate of ye chappel and deceased ye 26th day of July 1552, and lies buried in ye church.

William Gowge, the son of Thomas Gowge, was baptised the 6th November, 1575.

The name of Gowge frequently occurs in the registers. This lad afterwards became an eminent divine among the Puritans. He was a minister at Blackfriars. Neale* says he was for many years esteemed the father of London ministers. He sat in the assembly of divines and frequently filled the moderator's place. His works are "The Whole Armour of God"; Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews and on the Canticles; A Tract on the calling of the Jews; several sermons; and an exposition on the Lord's Prayer, &c.

Thomas Gowge, hisson, also a person of eminence, was baptised (at Bow Church) on September 29, 1605. He established several schools in Wales, at which he caused to be educated at his own expense nearly 2000 children, who were taught the English language. He printed 8000 Welsh bibles, 1000 of which he gave away, and directed the remainder to be sold at a cheap rate in the principal towns in Wales. He published several volumes of sermons, devotional works and tracts. He died in 1681 (not, however, at Bow) and the funeral sermon was preached by Archbishop Tillotson.

Mary, or Margaret, daughter of Hugh Vere, and John, son of John Vere,

* *Neale's History of the Puritans, vol. II., p. 33.*

baptised at Bow in 1581 and 1582 respectively, were descendants of John, Earl of Oxford.

Henry, son of the Right Hon. Lord Rich, baptised Aug. 19, 1590. He afterwards became the celebrated Earl of Holland, of whom anecdotes have been given in the account of Kensington.*

A Portuguese gentleman, treasurer to the King of Portugal, who was staying at the time in Bow, died in the house of "The Peter and Powle," and was buried the 1st April, 1591. The King of Portugal here mentioned was Don Antonio Perez, prior of Crato, who pretended to the crown of that kingdom in opposition to Philip II. of Spain. He was crowned at Lisbon, but was soon obliged to quit his new dominions by the superior power of Philip. He came to England in 1581, where he met with a kind reception from Elizabeth.†

Wm. Whitaker, Doctor of Theology at Cambridge, married Joan Fenner, April 8, 1591.

Mrs. Mary Yorke, daughter of Sir Edmund Yorke, buried 29th December, 1591.

Henry Watts, Merchant Taylor, married Anne Davis in 1606.

Marie Ingram, daughter of Sir Arthur Ingram, Knight, was brought from S. Leonards‡ and baptised the 20th June, 1616.

It is curious that Lysons states in his account of Bow that Thomas, son of Sir John Ingram, Knight, was baptised June 20, 1616. Sir John, according to Stow,§ was a Spanish merchant and citizen of London.

Mary, daughter of the Hon. Wm. Maynard, buried in Essex, February 20, 1688.

This Maynard was the second son of Lord Maynard, & it is recorded that he married the daughter and heir of Thomas Evans, Esq., of Stratford Bow. As I cannot find the entry in the registers, the wedding probably took place in some other church.

Bow Clay, a boy about 15 years of age, taken up in the street at Stratford in Essex, was baptised 16th March, 1717.

That the boy was clay there can be no doubt, and perhaps the name is appropriate, but it seems rather cruel to have inflicted such a name upon him. Probably it was the china industry of the place that suggested it.

The names of William Penkethman, the celebrated comedian, who was married here in 1714; & the wedding in 1726 of the Rev. John Henley, the famous orator, must close the list.

It will hardly be out of place to conclude this chapter with a list of the

* *Lysons.*

† *Rapin's History of England, Vol. II., p. 114.*

‡ *The adjoining parish of Bromley.*

§ *Stow's Survey, Book II., p. 154.*

rectors and parish clerks to whom the admirable condition of the registers is due.

Rectors.

1719 Robert Warren, D.D.	1811 Hamlet Harrison.
1740 James Parker.	1844 George Townshend Driffeld.
1740 Thomas Foxley.	1880 Wm. Pimblett Insley.
1771 Allan Harrison Eccles.*	1892 Marmaduke Hare.
1802 Samuel Henshall.	1899 Manley Power.
1808 Frodsham Hodson.	

Parish clerks (licensed by the Lord Bishop of London):

1718 — Rust.†	1807 William Hanson.
1754 Josiah Hunt.	1816 James Sholl.
1760 Joseph Dickenson.	1822 James Harris.
1764 James Dorrington.	1857 John Ivimey.
1802 William Ballinger.	1874 Henry Lewis Wheatley.

* *According to the Registers the Rev. Allan Harrison Eccles died of "decline," Oct. 6, 1801, aged 61 years, and was buried in the "Chancel under the Communion Table."*

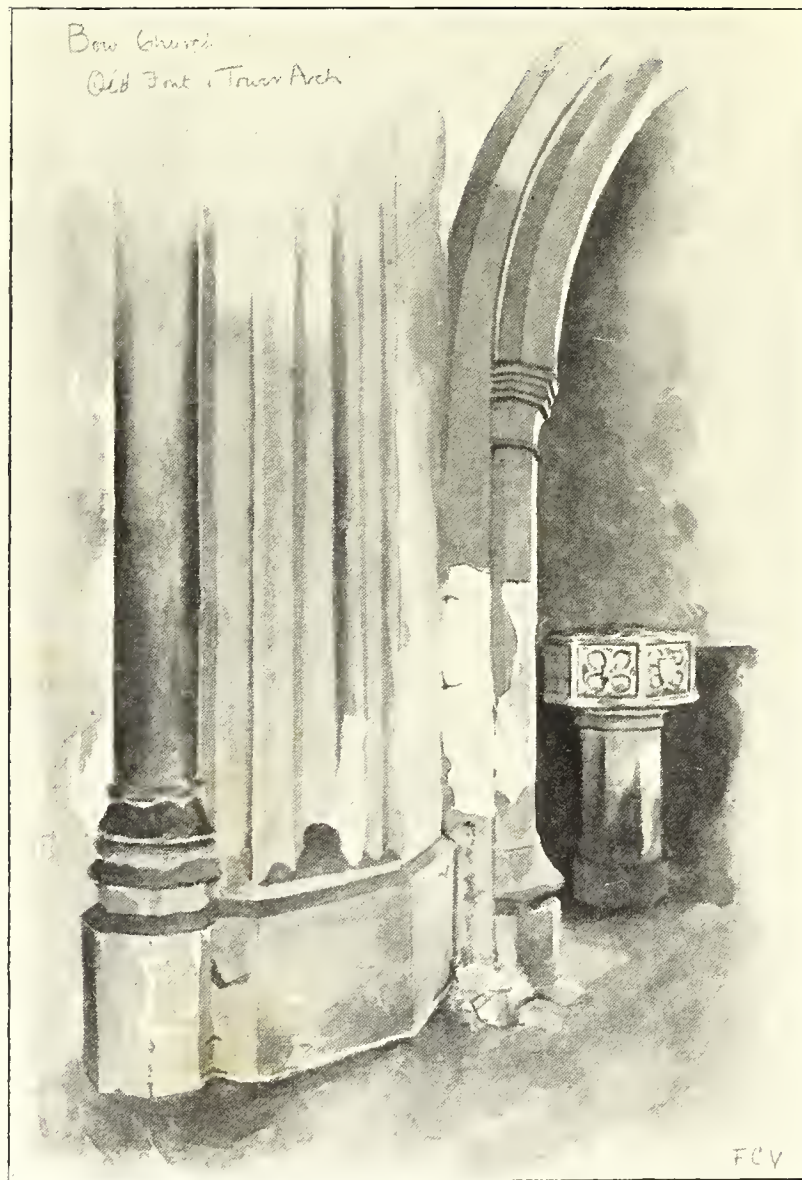
† *Memorandum of Dr. Warren, Dec. 22, 1724: "Mr. Rust, ye late Parish Clerk kept the Registers but very imperfectly and I could not get it out of his hands till the churchwardens and myself threatened to complain of him at Doctor's Commons." Reference to the above list will show that it does not appear who was parish clerk from 1724—1754.*

XXI.



The Western Arch and Window in 1896.

XXII.



The North-West Corner in 1896.

CHAPTER IV. A SHORT REVIEW OF THE RECENT RESTORATION AND SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES IT ENTAILED.

IF not from time immemorial, at any rate within the memory of living man, there have always been Restoration Difficulties. To go no farther back than 1829, the church was known to be greatly in need of repairs, and on the 29th January of that year matters came to a climax by the fall of the upper portion of the tower during a gale in the night. Some thirty-five years earlier the south aisle had been partly rebuilt and partly refaced and various minor works carried out, but no complete restoration had been made. It is a great misfortune that no funds have ever existed for the maintenance of the fabric. A little repair is required and the fact has to be ignored because there are no funds and the defects in question are not big enough to form the basis of a "Restoration Scheme" and are therefore left to become a serious matter.

On January 29, 1829, Mr. William Ford, an architect of local celebrity (especially among the Nonconformists of that day) was instructed to draw up a Report upon the church. His plans, in the writer's possession, are not published herewith because they are merely "proposed plans," and do not affect the Bow Church of to-day. No doubt the plans were good, if regarded in the spirit of that age, and they were certainly drastic and thoroughgoing. Shortly, Mr. Ford recommended that the whole of the church should be demolished except the lower part of the tower (the upper part had fallen) and that a new edifice should be raised. In the new design were large galleries on three sides of the church (similar to those in S. James, Ratcliffe, built about eight years later), there was neither chancel nor choir but a small recessed sanctuary at the east end *through* which one had to pass to reach the vestry. The church would have been well lighted and airy, but, beyond that, one can only be devoutly thankful that it was decided to put up with the old church a little longer. Gratitude, however, is due to Mr. Ford for the able way in which he repaired the upper portion of the tower and for the record of the work in the drawings he left.

From time to time repairs were executed, such as new lead roofs to aisles, the removal of the plaster ceiling, &c., but the structural defects were ignored as long as possible. About the year 1882, with a new energetic rector and a well-known builder for churchwarden, another attempt was made to grapple with the difficulty. Sir Arthur Blomfield, A.R.A., was asked to report upon the matter. He advocated the same plan as Mr.

*Mr. Ford's
Plans 1829*

*Sir Arthur
Blomfield's
Design 1882*

Ford had done in 1829, viz., to rebuild the whole of the edifice except the tower & the organ chamber. There was this difference, however, that Mr. Ford's proposed structure would have met with the admiration of few, while Sir Arthur Blomfield's design would have given the parishioners a well-proportioned and beautiful *new* church with the old tower. Opinions were divided between the desire to retain the ancient edifice, and a desire to have a new building which would give better accommodation and make all further restoration schemes unnecessary for the next generation or two. However it was found impossible to raise the funds, and owing greatly, it is believed, to the death of the churchwarden before mentioned,* the scheme was abandoned.

*The Repairs
of 1887 &
1891*

In 1887 the aisle roofs were renewed and the Prisca Coburne gallery removed, while in 1891 a scheme was adopted for reseating and cleaning the church, and about £300 was raised and expended, but this was in no sense a restoration. Several important items were included under this head, such as the removal of the carved and glazed screens behind the churchwardens' pews, the removal of the monumental stones in the floor and the substitution of wood blocks & tiles, and finally the raising of the level of the sanctuary.

In July, 1895, the rector and churchwardens instructed the architects Messrs. Hills & Son, to prepare a Report dealing with the fabric. Subsequently a committee was formed, Sir Arthur W. Blomfield, A.R.A., consented to act as Consulting Architect, and in February, 1896, plans, specifications, and quantities were prepared and approved by the Bishop of London's Fund, for rebuilding *and widening* the north aisle & erecting new choir vestry, and several minor matters. This scheme entailed the expenditure of some two thousand pounds and left the larger section of the restoration to be dealt with at a later date. A few months later (June, 1896), The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings drew up a Report generally deprecating the proposals. Funds had not come in so fast as had been hoped, and this criticism apparently killed what little life was left in the movement.

*The
S.P.B.A.
Report*

*The Subsidence
of the
Chancel
Roof*

In October of the same year, however, a serious subsidence of a portion of the chancel roof occurred. The architects reported that a further collapse would probably take place and recommended that the church be closed and the chancel boarded off. The committee at this time were not quite pulling together. Some thought that the better plan would be to demolish the church and rebuild it upon another site. If, it was argued, the London County Council would purchase the site and effect a widening of the road, the money so obtained would go a long way towards the building of a new church. This church could be made large enough to

* *Wm. Bangs.*

meet the requirements of the present time, and all anxiety about dilapidations (for long past a serious matter in so poor a parish) would be laid at rest for many years to come.

The Bow Vestry in December, 1896, recommended that the London County Council be approached "*with a view to the Council buying the site of the church as a Metropolitan Improvement.*" This recommendation was introduced and strongly urged by the senior churchwarden, while his colleague and the then rector also supported it, but hoped the Council would maintain the tower. Strong counter proposals were made, however, at the instance of the Committee for the Survey of the Memorials of Greater London, and in accordance with the S.P.A.B. scheme, with the result that the London County Council declined to entertain the proposal.

*Proposed
Sale of the
Church*

After this nothing was done for several months. Services were held at the Vestry Hall for nearly a year, when a temporary iron church was erected in the churchyard. The Bishop of Stepney* then took the matter up with vigour and insisted on the church being closed, as any further fall during service might cause a panic and loss of life. He at once formed a committee of the following gentlemen:

*The Church
Closed*

The Right Rev. The Bishop of Stepney, Chairman.

The Hon. Lionel Holland, M.P. for Bow, Treasurer.

W. Wallace Bruce, London County Councillor for Bow and Bromley.

The Rev. Marmaduke Hare, subsequently replaced by The Rev. Manley Power, M.A., Rector.

*The Bishop
of Stepney's
Committee*

Waite Chester Sewell,

John William Elkington,

C. R. Ashbee, M.A., Hon. Sec.

to the Committee,

} Churchwardens.

} Representative of the Society for the
Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Ambrose Poynter, Representative of the National Trust.

† William Christie, a late Churchwarden.

† Bernard Hunter,

Edward Byas,

Walter A. Hills,

Osborn C. Hills,

} Representing the Parishioners.

} Architects.

The first meeting was held on the 14th March, 1898, & the only changes on the Committee have been caused by the appointment to the living of the Rev. Manley Power, M.A., in the place of Mr. Hare; & the decease of Mr. Bernard Hunter in April, & Mr. William Christie in July, 1899. The Committee had the difficult task of drawing up a scheme that would

* *Bishop Ingram.*

† *Died April, 1899.*

† *Died July, 1899.*

satisfy the various societies and critics. All idea of enlarging or altering the church was abandoned; and every effort made to secure a thorough restoration of the existing fabric with as little alteration as possible.

No proper estimate could be formed of the expenditure required on the tower as no scaffolding had been erected, but the architects' estimate for the remainder of the work of restoration amounted to £3,700, and the Committee agreed to assume that another thousand pounds would be required for the tower. Appeals were issued to the City Companies, Church Building Societies, and other bodies. The "Times," the "Daily Graphic," the "Builder," and many other papers lent their columns, & a great effort was made to raise enough to warrant a start being made.

*Summary of
work done*

What has been done may be briefly summarised as follows: The chancel roof has been practically re-formed by inserting new deal timbers between the old oak rafters of 1755. The latter are left intact though they now do no work. The old heavy oak beams have been spliced and strengthened with oak or iron and the metal covered with mortar to preserve it.

The gable has been rebuilt in brickwork as before. The old gable was so roughly built, and in so ruinous a state, that the writer contended it was evidently meant as a merely temporary covering during the war,* and that the most intelligent restoration would be to put back the flat roof & battlemented east end as it existed until the year 1755. The Restoration Committee, however, decided to follow the advice of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and to rebuild the red brick gable and tiled roof as they found them.

The walls have been repaired & the joints filled with tiles or flints bedded in mortar; one buttress has been underpinned with concrete and partly rebuilt; and the other, at the south-east corner, has been taken down and rebuilt. In restoring the hood mould of the south window it was discovered that a doorway had existed there at one time, but no mention of it has been found in any of the writings examined.

The old vestry has been provided with new lead; a new floor has been laid; the brickwork refaced externally; a new window has taken the place of the old door, and the old window is blocked up. The choir vestry is the only addition to the fabric made by the Committee. The architects strongly recommended that the red brick "excrescence," as previous writers have called the old vestry, should be faced with stone and form part of the design of a new stone-built choir vestry. The Society, however, deemed that brickwork was more appropriate taking into consideration the atmospheric conditions in East London that are so destructive to stone, and that moreover it would be less calculated to enter into competition with the

* See page 14.

old work. As the Society's proposal had the additional merit of being economical, the Committee decided to act upon it.

It had been much hoped that the nave roof would need but little repair. A close examination, however, revealed that the tile laths were completely rotten; and in the end the roof had to be stripped, new oak rafters inserted with sequoia panels and new cleft oak laths. The old tiles were replaced as far as possible, similar secondhand hand-made tiles were obtained from a contractor at Battersea who happened to be demolishing some old houses at the time, and the deficiency was made up with the best new hand-made tiles. Three oak tie beams, each fourteen inches by ten, were inserted to tie the walls and secure them from spreading further.

The south aisle has been practically untouched, though the battlements have been rebuilt with the old facing stones, & a few quoins at the south-east corner have been renewed.

The north aisle required very careful treatment, & that the wall has been preserved and restored, and not rebuilt, is due to the personal care & skill of the master mason. The brick battlements have been repaired & pointed, and some of the capping is new.

A new doorway has been formed in the north aisle giving access from the church to the choir lobby. In cutting away the masonry it was found that an old window had existed.

For the rest, the old decayed plaster ceiling has been cut away and the spaces between the rafters filled with sequoia wood as before stated. The stained and varnished deal seats have been removed and replaced by chairs in the nave, while the choir benches are now of oak of an open pattern in lieu of the old deal benches.

An oak dado has been fixed round the walls & piers. The internal double windows have been added to reduce the noise from the passing traffic.

All the monuments and other work have been cleaned only, and the walls, &c., have been painted and colour-washed.

At one time considerable difficulty appeared to be threatening. The District surveyor, whose duty it is to safeguard the interests of the public, desired that a large quantity of the masonry should be demolished and rebuilt, whereas the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings were extremely anxious that not one stone should be removed unnecessarily.

The architects however, were allowed to proceed.

The upper or restored portion of the tower, for the most part, merely required repointing, though a dozen or more new stones were built in. On removing the rotten brick panels of the ringers' gallery the remains of tracery of the old windows was discovered. It is much to be regretted that the tracery of the west window of this room has long since been cut away. I think that every writer of this century who has described Bow Church

*Structure
considered
beyond repair*

has considered the structure to be beyond repair. More than a century since it was described as "what remains of an ancient building;"* and in the present decade Sir Walter Besant, himself a member of the Committee under whose auspices this monograph is issued, has called it a "building that must soon pass into oblivion," & expressed the hope that someone will make an etching of it before it has quite crumbled away. I have tried to show how this was also the view held by eminent professional experts, and when in addition we find how in 1896 the church was closed as dangerous, it will be seen that the term "Restoration Difficulties" was no idle one.

The Committee's predominating wish has been throughout to give the ancient edifice a new and lengthy lease of life without destroying the character and mellow softness of a church "Grown grey beneath the shadowy touch of time."

**The "Mirror,"* 1825.

THE END.

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HERE ENDS THE SECOND MONOGRAPH OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE SURVEY OF THE MEMORIALS OF GREATER LONDON, WHEREIN IS SHOWN HOW THE OLD CHURCH OF STRATFORD AT BOW, WHICH HAD BEEN CONDEMNED TO DESTRUCTION BY THE RESTORERS, HAS BY THE LOVING CARE OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT OTHERWISE, BEEN SAVED TO THE DWELLERS OF EAST LONDON IN MUCH OF ITS ORIGINAL BEAUTY. PRINTED FOR THE COMMITTEE AT THE PRESS OF THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT, LTD., AT ESSEX HOUSE, BOW, MDCCCC.



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ERRATA.

p. 29, line 9 from bottom, for *ar.* read *az.*

p. „ „ 7 „ „ „ *su.* „ *sa.*

p. 31 „ 4 „ top „ *amulets* „ *annulets.*

p. „ „ 8 „ „ „ *Armicer* „ *Armiger.*

p. „ „ 21 „ „ „ *sita* „ *hic sita*, etc.

The following was omitted in error:

The church possesses a modern brass lectern bearing the following inscription: "Presented by J. B. and A. C. Durham to the Church of St. Mary Stratford Bow. June, 1886."

The illustration on p. 20 shows a section through wall of tower, the outside of wall facing the outer margin of page.

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